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Historical Memoirs  
OF THE  
Emperor Alexander I.  
AND  
The Court of Russia



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ALEXANDER I.

Historical Memoirs  
OF THE  
Emperor Alexander I.  
AND  
The Court of Russia

BY  
MADAME LA COMTESSE DE CHOISEUL-GOUFFIER

*Translated from the Original French*  
BY MARY BERENICE PATTERSON

*With an Introduction and Notes*



SECOND EDITION

CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1901

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## Introductory Note

### TO THE AMERICAN TRANSLATION

THE Comtesse de Choiseul-Gouffier, *née* Comtesse de Tisenhaus, was born at Vilna, in Russian Poland, in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. Her father was a wealthy landed proprietor of Polish descent. Of the family history of the Comtesse de Tisenhaus we know but little apart from what these pages reveal to us. Her family had been intimate in the court circles of Catherine II. and Paul I.; and Alexander I., upon his accession to the throne of Russia, continued to honor the Comte de Tisenhaus with his friendship. However, the comte shared the hope of a large number of his countrymen that Napoleon would recognize the rights of Poland and give it once more an independent, united national existence. To this end a delegation of Polish nobles waited on Napoleon at Vilna, on the twenty-eighth of June, 1812. He showed them but scant courtesy, and gave them no hope that he would aid in the realization of their wishes. Nevertheless, the Poles continued to look to Bonaparte as their only friend. It is stated on undoubted authority that besides the sixty thousand Poles in the French army a hundred thousand implored permission to raise the standard

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of independence and garrison Poland as the outpost of Europe against Russian aggression.<sup>1</sup> Among those who thus deserted the Russian emperor was the Comte de Tisenhaus. In this juncture it fell to the lot of the author of these Memoirs to preserve the family estates from sequestration. The comtesse, up to the time of her first meeting with Alexander, shared her father's distrust of the czar; but after meeting him, she, in common with many others, was impressed with Alexander's frankness, energy, and nobility of character. This impression, upon a more extended and more intimate acquaintance, deepened into a loyal and devoted friendship on the part of the subject, which was returned by the emperor. Refined and delicate sympathy, combined with a singularly engaging and open mind and a respectful admiration of the personal qualities of Alexander, gave to the friendship of Comtesse de Tisenhaus the qualities most valued by the czar.

The political intrigues between Napoleon and the Poles, and especially the requirement on the part of Bonaparte that Alexander should carry out the Continental blockade against England, from which Russia was suffering grievously, caused Alexander to terminate the peace which had existed between Russia and France since the signing of the treaty of Tilsit, July seventh, 1807.<sup>1</sup> To this end he massed his troops on the western border of Russian Poland in March, 1812, and made his headquarters at Towiany. Here, on April twenty-seventh, Mlle. de Tisenhaus

<sup>1</sup> Russia. Morfill.



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first met Alexander; and the volume before us tells us the story of the friendship that existed between them until his death at Taganrog, December first, 1825.

The comtesse married the French gentleman, M. de Choiseul-Gouffier, and resided thenceforth in Paris. This gentleman belonged to one of the first families of France. His youth had been passed in various European capitals, where his father, Comte Marie-Gabriel-Florens-Auguste-de-Choiseul-Gouffier, had held important positions; notably that of ambassador to Constantinople, where he had successfully established the influence of France. While there the comte declined the office of ambassador to the Court of St. James, preferring to remain at Constantinople. At the outbreak of the Revolution he adhered to the king, and was proscribed by the revolutionary government. He retired to Russia, where he was a favorite with Paul I., who nominated him as Privy Councillor and Director of the Académie des Beaux Arts, and of the Bibliothèque Impériale. The comte returned to France in 1802, and after the restoration Louis XVIII. appointed him Minister of State and Peer of the Realm. Notwithstanding the busy life he had lived, the comte found opportunities for exercising his literary tastes, and is remembered as the author of several important treatises; among others a magnificent work entitled "A Picturesque Journey in Greece," elegantly illustrated, which won him an election to the Academy of Inscriptions and the French Academy.

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A book, as well as a person, has a history, and it is only to be regretted that the first has no means of telling its story. We may imagine what obstacles it encountered before it became a book and entered its own world; what vicissitudes it passed through in that world; how by some it was valued, and by others laid on a dark shelf to be covered by dust till, perchance, a stranger greeted it and recognized its value, or picked it up only to cast it into some other corner. So this volume has had its history. Three years after the death of Alexander, Mme. de Choiseul-Gouffier published in Paris her "*Mémoires Historiques sur l'Empereur Alexandre et la Cour de Russie.*" From the date of its publication this work was recognized as an authority on the life of Alexander I., and as a source of reliable and valuable information on the conditions and customs prevailing in Russia at the time of Napoleon's invasion. It was also prized for its descriptions of St. Petersburg and Csarzko-Sélo.

It was not long until the edition was exhausted; but before that time arrived historical and biographical writers had made copious extracts from the book, and had even based their articles on the facts therein contained. Among others, M. de Lamartine drew from it liberally in his "*Histoire de Russie.*" M. Dumas owned his indebtedness to it in his "*Maître d'Armes.*" Not only did students of Russia and her affairs turn to the pages of the *Souvenir*, but readers eager for every detail of information about Napoleon and his ill-fated campaign welcomed

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the comtesse's contribution. After the first edition had been exhausted, numerous requests came to her for a new issue of the work. She tells us in the preface to the new edition that when she finally determined to accede to these requests she was unable to procure a copy of the first edition of the book either in the Imperial libraries of France and Russia, or to find one in the possession of her family. As a result of its rarity the work itself has been little known; quoted and referred to it has been by many, but chiefly at second-hand. This alone can account for its not having been translated into English at an earlier date, for it is surprisingly interesting, bright, and companionable, and of unquestioned historical accuracy. It gives a lively picture of the thought and manner of a day separated from ours by nearly a century. It tells of a nation's hopes rising to vigorous life only to be disappointed and ultimately destroyed.

The translation here offered to English readers has been made from the first edition as it came from the author's hand. The first three chapters as now published did not appear in the second edition issued in 1862. The reason for this omission was probably a twofold one. In the first place, the information they contained was not first-hand. The account of the author's personal reminiscences begins with Chapter IV., which, in the second edition, is Chapter I. The second reason lay in the remonstrance of those persons who took exception to the author's view that the conspirators led by

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Comte Pahlen had killed Paul I. For a considerable period of time after the sudden death of Emperor Alexander I., the nature of his father's death was a matter of dispute. Emperor Paul's well-known infirmity of mind, and consequent physical debility, caused a party at court to affirm that his death was the result of a stroke of apoplexy. Defenders of this view quoted the certificate of death issued by Alexander's surgeon, Dr. Wylie, who embalmed the body of the deceased emperor, and stated that he died from the effects of apoplexy. The surgeon is further quoted as saying that, allowing for the injuries caused by the mode of death, the state of his brain rendered it highly probable that he would have soon died of apoplexy.<sup>1</sup> At this writing the unanimous opinion of historians is that Emperor Paul was assassinated, and that the view of the case graphically narrated by the comtesse is historically correct.

The Publishers consider it a privilege to present the first translation into the English language of these remarkable Memoirs, and they do so with the confident hope that the public will welcome the lively and noble picture which is here given of one who did not a little to deserve the title of "Restorer of the Peace of Europe."

CHICAGO, February, 1900.

<sup>1</sup> Life and Times of Alexander I. By C. Joyneville.

# Publisher's Note

TO THE FIRST FRENCH EDITION

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**H**ISTORICAL memoirs have been the fashion for about ten years. This has become a fixed phenomenon, and a phenomenon the more remarkable on account of the countless volumes which, to use the expression of a modern writer, "show history *en déshabille*," and are generally written on the same plan, woven from the same material, produced by the same passions, and, one might say, formed in the same mould.

The long convalescence from that delirious fever called the French Revolution; the brilliant period of military glory which followed the first years of a restoration which has not given all it promised,—such is the theme which a thousand writers of our day have seen fit to amplify, almost always with talent, but which they have often misrepresented without scruple. These memoirs have been sought after and devoured, because nearly all, with very few exceptions, were clever, and wit is a seasoning which will always overcome satiety and nausea. The readers of this kind of literature may well repeat from Parney:

"Nous rebradons de vieux habits,  
Dont l'étoffe est toujours la même."

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But the brilliancy of the embroidery is attractive; and the publishers do not weary of selling the repetitions which the public are never tired of buying. But here is the reverse, the other side of the medal, which we print to-day.

The Memoirs of the Comtesse de Choiseul-Gouffier are written in our language by a Polish hand. They are not even our own inspirations. One feels that this work is of a different stamp, that it gives other opinions, reflects other manners, — in a word, it has quite a different physiognomy. Not that the hyperborean influence of the forests of Lithuania is felt. Madame de Choiseul has known how to find at Vilna that delicate touch which distinguishes the productions of the fair sex under all latitudes. Her pictures possess no less warmth than charm of originality.

The affection — perhaps we ought to say the tenderness — which the author of these Memoirs avows for the Emperor Alexander is carried almost to adoration. One might believe that Madame de Choiseul in painting the Russian autocrat had drawn her admiration from the same source from which M. de Las Cases drew his colors for his panegyric on Napoleon. To praise men thus, even when they have been crowned, doubtless savors of exaggeration; but in the work which we present to the public we find that praise is kept constantly subservient to the strict truth.

The Emperor Alexander is kept constantly before us, and by his own utterances he paints his own portrait in the Memoirs of which he is the hero. After having read them one will retain an exact idea of the character of this prince, whom the bold audacity of a

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very illustrious man has placed in the very first rank of modern celebrities.

This book of Madame de Choiseul-Gouffier's will be read with avidity in the salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where one lives on old aristocratic memories. Young France will, nevertheless, be satisfied with the concessions which the author has made to new ideas, and especially with the romantic touch happily imparted by her style.

Finally, history may gather many a fact thus far unknown from these Memoirs which we publish. They contain new details concerning the assassination of Paul I.; the conduct of Alexander during and after the conspiracy which gave him the empire; what took place during the campaign of 1812; the attitude of the Congress of Vienna when it learned that in the month of March, 1815, Napoleon had escaped from the Island of Elba and returned to France; and concerning the tragic death of Alexander, which the author leaves covered with a transparent veil.





## Author's Preface

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THREE years have hardly passed since that event occurred which plunged Russia into sorrow and mourning, and already two lives of the Emperor Alexander have appeared.

Without pretending to attack the merit of those works, I will take the liberty of saying that, being devoted almost entirely to the description of political events and of the memorable struggle between two of the greatest powers of Europe, they have done little to show the character of the monarch who played so important a rôle in those events. They have given only an imperfect view of Alexander, the august adversary of a man who showed himself only in a few respects greater than his virtuous rival.

In the first transport of grief with which I was inspired by the death of my sovereign, that prince whose noble and touching character I have had the happiness to know and to admire, I attempted to recall the virtues whose loss I deplore. But whether an acute and recent sorrow excited my imagination too much, or I was carried away by the grandeur of the subject, I soon saw that the tone adopted in the work could not be sustained by my feeble talents, and would not even be suitable to the history.

## Author's Preface

Abandoning this fruitless effort, how I wished that the distinguished writer whose gifted pen alone is worthy of interpreting the religion of kings would undertake a subject so worthy of him! Certain harmonious accents which reached my ear gave me hope that my prayers would be heard. But the voice was stilled, and my desires were changed to regrets.

Still, in meditating, whether in the silence of solitude or amid the commotion of cities and of courts, upon the beautiful life of Alexander, I have felt that I could render little justice to the eminent virtues of that prince in supposing that great talent alone was worthy of rendering homage to them and of making them known to posterity. Facts speak for themselves; and those which pertain to the fame of this august personage have a charm so pathetic that a grateful heart is pained in recording them. Therefore I venture to flatter myself that sensitive minds upon whom the cold influence of the times has not exerted a blasting influence may read with interest my recollections of the noble and generous qualities of the sovereign who merited the love and gratitude, not only of his own subjects, but of all Europe.

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HISTORICAL MEMOIRS  
OF THE  
EMPEROR ALEXANDER I.  
AND  
THE COURT OF RUSSIA

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CHAPTER I

ALEXANDER was born in 1777. His early years rapidly developed in this young prince the happy disposition which he had received from nature. All seemed in harmony in the noble child, who was destined to occupy one of the most important thrones in Europe and a brilliant place in history. The remarkable beauty of his person corresponded with that of his mind and seemed to be an emanation from it. The invariable sweetness of his character made him the object of universal adoration from his tenderest infancy, and the dearest hopes of that powerful empire of Russia were fixed upon him.

The Empress Catherine had such a strong affection for her grandson that it is said she proposed to remove her own son, the unfortunate Paul Petrowitz, from the throne and to appoint Alexander as her successor. At that time hereditary succession to the

## Historical Memoirs of the

throne of Russia was not the invariable rule, the law of primogeniture not having been established till the following reign. Moreover, nothing could daunt the genius of Catherine, accustomed to see everything bend to her will. She even wished to preside alone over the prince's education. If the rare qualities which have been seen in Alexander could leave anything more to be desired, it would have been that the august grandmother of the prince had retained the right to watch over the first impressions of her grandson—in the midst of a court elegant and polished indeed, but without morals—with that vigilant sagacity, that clear firmness of principle, of which she has given so many proofs.

It is difficult to say what power such lessons in wisdom would have had over the mind of such a youth, given by that incomparable princess who consecrated her life to the welfare of humanity.

However, the choice which the empress made in the person of Colonel de La Harpe<sup>1</sup> as preceptor of the young duke, was calculated to calm maternal solicitude and satisfy the expectations of the nation. The wise instructor found in the august pupil confided to his care the happiest natural gifts. To perfect the work of nature and to accomplish the task committed to him, he endeavored to cultivate and develop the amiable and charming disposition of his young pupil.

Possessed of a warm and affectionate heart, Alex-

<sup>1</sup> Frédéric César de La Harpe (born in the Pays de Vaud 1754, died 1838). From 1790 to 1800 he was the chief or most powerful director of the Helvetic Republic. In 1814 Alexander gave him the rank of general in his army. He wrote several treatises on Swiss politics.

# Emperor Alexander I.

ander conceived a devoted attachment for this estimable man, who had consecrated his time and care to him, and he always regarded his instructor as a sure and faithful friend.

Alexander loved to learn. He had a remarkable memory and quick, penetrating, and refined perceptions. In his early years he showed a taste for military science, occupying himself zealously with what he was pleased to call his service, following exactly and observing punctiliously the strictest discipline and subordination. He possessed in a high degree the love of order and work. That which one could not help most admiring in him was the perfect evenness of his temper, a quality very rare and very valuable in a sovereign, which had for its source the goodness of his heart. Nothing could change the sweet benevolence which showed itself in his face as well as in his actions.

Alexander spoke several languages, especially French, with elegance and fluency. His manners were charming. A certain timidity was noticeable in his early youth. No one ever possessed to a greater degree the happy gift of gaining all hearts; and no one, I am sure, could have seen Alexander and heard him speak without saying to himself, "How happy I should be to call this man my friend!"

When Alexander was scarcely more than a youth the Empress Catherine, fearing for him that dangerous period of life, decided to put a curb on his passions by submitting him, still so young, to the sacred ties of marriage,—an imprudence which influenced, more than is generally known, the future and in-

## Historical Memoirs of the

ward happiness of this prince and of his interesting spouse.

According to the usage established at the Russian court, three young German princesses were brought and submitted to the critical scrutiny of Catherine, who was to choose from them a consort for her grandson. The choice was determined, it is said, in a very singular manner, and simple chance served Catherine as happily as the clear judgment of that princess could have done after a thorough investigation.

Seated at a window of the imperial palace, the czarina saw the young princesses arrive, who, by the way, were all remarkably good-looking. Catherine observed that the first one to leave the carriage descended with too much haste; she augured ill from such precipitation. The next caught her foot in the train of her dress and almost fell. "How stupid! how awkward!" exclaimed the empress. Finally the third descended with perfect composure and dignity. "That is she who will be the grand duchess!" exclaimed Catherine.

This was Elizabeth of Baden.<sup>1</sup> Her face confirmed the empress in her first impression, and charmed the young grand duke.

Very much in love with his young bride, Alexander enjoyed in her society and cultivated mind and the tenderness which she felt for him all that could ameliorate the hard lot to which he was con-

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Alexievna (born 1779, died 1826). Her maiden name was Louisa Maria Augusta. In 1793 she became the consort of Alexander. Her character is represented as having been very amiable.



EMPRESS ELIZABETH.



## Emperor Alexander I.

demned after the death of the Empress Catherine, and the accession of his father to the throne. Long continued mental suffering had hardened the character of Paul I., although he was naturally possessed of a clear mind and a sensitive heart.

The fatal disposition of his mind to suspicion, and the excessive irritability of his temper so long held in passive submission, knew no restraint after he had attained sovereign power. Time only increased his unhappy passions, and in those moments when everything was to be feared from their violence, from which even his family fled, Alexander, who alone knew how to oppose with respectful firmness the will of the emperor, sometimes succeeded in calming the mind suffering from an incurable disease. Devoured by that ardent and suspicious imagination which pictured to him constant dangers and secret enemies, the unfortunate monarch was his own greatest enemy, and he ended by making himself the victim of his own morbid suspicions.

Exiles increased to a frightful extent. Terror reigned everywhere,—at court, in the towns, in the army, and even in the most remote provinces of the empire. No one could flatter himself that on account of the prudence of his conduct he was safe from arrest. No one could count on the morrow. The arrival of a courier of the cabinet in the most distant part of the country caused universal terror. Each one, trembling, asked himself, “Is this fatal order for me?” and thought he saw the *kibitka* ready to transport him to Siberia.

An involuntary forgetfulness of the rigorous etiquette observed at court, the neglecting to wear a

## Historical Memoirs of the

costume prescribed by the emperor, the least negligence in military service was sufficient to bring down upon one's self the displeasure of the emperor and the pain of banishment; and Siberia was being peopled by exiles of illustrious names.

Among the foreigners of distinction to be found at St. Petersburg was Count Choiseul-Gouffier, formerly ambassador at Constantinople; and he had been loaded with favors by the Emperor Paul, whose generosity also knew no limit. This count suddenly received an order to retire to Lithuania, to those estates which he held through the munificence of the emperor, and to leave St. Petersburg within twenty-four hours. Not being able to explain to himself the cause of his disgrace, Count Choiseul sent his son to ask Pahlen, governor of St. Petersburg, for a passport. Pahlen was at the parade when the messenger arrived, but returned soon. Perceiving Mons. Choiseul, he pushed the servant who came to take his hat and sword brusquely aside, and exclaimed in an agitated voice, "My dear sir, I am in despair at what has happened to your family. This cannot go on! It is time to put an end to it." M. de Choiseul, although extremely young, was much struck by this imprudent speech, and by the singular expression of Pahlen's face as he allowed those remarkable words to escape him. Eighteen months later, the Emperor Paul was dead, was assassinated.

It would perhaps not be out of place to introduce here that profound dissembler who played such an important rôle in this conspiracy that it might be said he was the author of it.



# Emperor Alexander I.

Count Pahlen,<sup>1</sup> a gentleman of Courland, entered the Russian army very young, and during the reign of Catherine II. reached the rank of major general. He owed the place of civil governor of Riga to the protection of the favorite Zouboff. The Emperor Paul, some time after ascending the throne, passed through Riga, was pleased with Pahlen, and ordered him to come to St. Petersburg. Paul, with that precipitancy which characterized all his actions, loaded the new favorite with dignities, gifts, and honors. He appointed him chief of his guards and governor of St. Petersburg, decorated him with the highest orders of the empire, and presented him with large estates in Courland, his own country.

The soul of Pahlen knew too well how to forget benefits received. He kept up secret relations with the Zouboffs, his old protectors, and concerted with them the fall of the prince who had been so generous to him, and who had elevated him to so high a position. The motive to such black ingratitude is found in the immoral character of Pahlen: he loved pleasure to excess. He was a bad officer, moreover, and succumbed under the weight of the military details with which the emperor charged him, as well as under the tedium of the minute reports he was obliged to make every day concerning the private life, actions, and words of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg.

Being as prudent as he was perfidious, he tried to run as little risk as possible in the conspiracy, and to put himself at the head of it with great circumspec-

<sup>1</sup> Count Pierre de Pahlen (born in Livonia, 1744, died at Mittau, 1826), was at one time Ambassador to Stockholm, and Governor of Courland.

## Historical Memoirs of the

tion; he therefore associated in the enterprise only friends upon whom he could rely with perfect confidence. Platon Zouboff,<sup>1</sup> the bitterest enemy of Paul, to whom that prince had had the imprudence to leave the immense possessions acquired in the preceding reign, seemed to Pahlen the fittest instrument to employ in a plot in which the former favorite of Catherine found an opportunity to satisfy his feelings of personal hatred and revenge; moreover, Zouboff having been a long time in favor, had preserved many of his relations with the court, and his brother Valerian was always surrounded by unprincipled persons ready to serve in all sorts of crimes.

Pahlen, being pretty sure of Zouboff's readiness to second his views, showed a desire to form an alliance with him, and that he might be released from exile to his estates, to which he had been condemned, Pahlen advised him to feign a wish to marry the daughter of Koutaisoff, another favorite of Paul's.

The emperor had suddenly raised this Koutaisoff, a little Turkish slave, his barber, to be one of the most important personages of the empire, giving him the title of count, and loading him with favors. Koutaisoff soon received a letter from Zouboff, asking his daughter in marriage. Delighted with the honor, he carried this epistle to the emperor and throwing himself at his feet, begged the emperor not to put any obstacle in the way of his daughter's good fortune by refusing Zouboff permission to return to St. Petersburg.

<sup>1</sup> Platon Zouboff (Zubov) (born 1767, died 1822) became, in 1791, a favorite of Empress Catherine II., who appointed him Grand Master of the Artillery. He was the most powerful Russian subject until the death of Catherine (1796), after which he was disgraced.

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Paul accorded this favor without hesitation, saying that this project of Zouboff's was the only sensible idea of his whole life.

Zouboff agreed perfectly with Pahlen's plans. The latter first made himself sure of a part of the guards; for, unfortunately, Paul, by imposing excessive duty, by painful reproaches, and by severe punishments, had alienated that corps, which had seen many a defection take place in the palace without the shedding of blood.

The real purpose of the conspiracy, at least so the conspirators pretended, did not go so far as to deprive the emperor of his life. It was proposed, they said, to compel him to sign an act of abdication, by which he should consent to resign the crown into the hands of the heir, the Grand Duke Alexander, reserving to himself the liberty to fix his residence either in the environs of St. Petersburg, or in one of the provinces of the empire, or even out of Russia in whatever country he should choose.

Pahlen and the other conspirators knew perfectly well that to remove the ruler of a vast empire, without assuring it of a successor, was an impossible project, and not to be thought of. Knowing, on the other hand, the noble character of Alexander, they had little hope that he would accept the regency.

Pahlen believed that the only means to reach his end was to cause a division in the imperial family, between father and children, between husband and wife, and to induce the emperor to subject his own family to cruelty, injustice, and persecution.

At length one of the conspirators, stung by remorse or perhaps apprehensive of the consequences

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of an enterprise so horrible, without wishing to betray his accomplices, revealed the conspiracy by an anonymous letter. Filled with the greatest alarm, Paul sent immediately for Pahlen. The latter, who was prepared for this interview (some say that it was Pahlen himself who revealed the secret) and had his answer ready, presented himself before his master with the most perfect coolness, listened without showing the slightest emotion to the violent words of menace, anger, and fury which Paul poured forth, the sound of which would have terrified a culprit less hardened. At these words of the emperor, "A conspiracy has been formed against me, and you, the governor of St. Petersburg, you are ignorant of it!" Pahlen answered, "Pardon me, sire, I am not only not ignorant of it, but I am the more certain that it exists as I have a part in it." At these astonishing words the emperor's countenance showed anxiety, doubt, and surprise. "Yes, sire," continued Pahlen, with the same imperturbability, "all the members of this conspiracy are known to me. I am of their number, but it is to serve you, to protect your life. None of those guilty ones can escape my vigilance or the justice of your Imperial Majesty. These madmen rush to their own ruin in meditating yours."

"Who are they?" cried Paul, whose excitement increased with each word of his perfidious confidant.

"Sire, prudence forbids me to name them, but after that which I have had the honor to reveal to your Majesty, dare I flatter myself that you will accord me your entire confidence and rely upon my zeal to guard your safety?"

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This mysterious language had only the effect of exciting still more the ardent curiosity of the emperor, whose mind, misled by mistrust, presumed to fix his odious suspicion on his virtuous spouse, on his respectful and submissive son. "Who are they?" repeated Paul, with vehemence. "Who are they? I will know!" "Siré," said Pahlen, bowing his head, "reverence prevents me from revealing the illustrious names—" "I understand," replied Paul, in a muffled voice, and as if suffocated with painful emotion. "The empress—" continued he, fixing his penetrating eyes on Pahlen. Pahlen did not reply. "The Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine?" Pahlen answered only by silence. The emperor was also silent; but silence on his part portended a storm.

An order to arrest the heir to the throne and his royal brother was the first act of the father, who believed himself betrayed by all whom he had held most dear. "As to the Empress Marie,"<sup>1</sup> added Paul, in a menacing tone, "I will dispose of her Majesty myself." The grand dukes were to be conducted to the fortress of . . ., and the empress shut up in a monastery.

In depriving himself thus of the surest supports of the throne and of his own life, this unfortunate prince delivered himself with blind confidence into the hands of the traitor who was to decide his fate. "Good and faithful Pahlen," he said to the latter, "I leave everything to thee; watch over thy master, I pray thee." Saying these words, he opened his arms, and

<sup>1</sup> Marie Feodorovna (born 1725, died 1828) was a princess of Würtemberg. Her maiden name was Sophia Dorothea. In 1776 she married Paul.

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Pahlen had the assurance to receive that mark of affection from his confiding sovereign, whose days were already numbered in the depths of his heart.

After leaving the emperor, Pahlen hastened to join the other conspirators, and having assembled them, he said to those of the band who were the least hardened, in order to revive their fury: "The secret is out. He is still ignorant, however, of the names of those connected with our enterprise; but who can tell if a new traitor may not reveal to him the whole plan of our undertaking? If life is dear to you, believe me we must hasten to finish our work, hasten to effect the deliverance of our country!" That traitor of whom he spoke was no other than himself. This man, it has been proved, cherished the double project of betraying either his sovereign or the accomplices of his treason, according to the chances offered him. In case of some unforeseen event, and if at the decisive moment fortune declared itself against the conspirators, his plan was to arrest the culpable and say to the emperor, "Sire, you are saved. My task is accomplished!"

After agreeing upon some measures dictated by prudence, the conspirators decided upon a time to accomplish their crime.

Having taken leave of them, Pahlen, armed with the fatal order which the emperor had just given him, went to the palace of the Grand Duke Alexander. Being introduced immediately into the presence of the young prince, he bowed profoundly, feigning despondency, and informed the grand duke of the decree of the emperor. "What!" cried Alexander, "his Imperial Majesty, my father, will deprive me of

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my liberty! What crime have I committed to bring this punishment upon myself?" "Your Imperial Highness is not ignorant of the fact," said Pahlen, bowing again, "that here, unfortunately, one sometimes incurs the chastisement without having committed the offence." At these words the grand duke gave Pahlen a severe look. After a few moments of silence, Alexander said: "The emperor is master of my fate; I submit to him. Show me the order." Pahlen presented the order.

Hardly had Alexander glanced at the paper, when he exclaimed mournfully, "And my brother too!" Pahlen, in order to make the blow as severe as possible, informed him what would be the fate of his innocent mother also. "Ah! this is too much!" said the grand duke, covering his face to hide from the attendants the spectacle of his grief.

Pahlen then threw himself at the feet of the prince. "Monseigneur," he said, "deign to listen to me. It is necessary, in order to prevent a great misfortune, to put an end to the frightful vagaries of your august father. To-day he aims at your liberty only, but who knows, in the storm of his passions, which often deprive him of his reason, where his imperious and masterful will may carry him? Think of the unfortunate Alexis Petrowitz! —"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alexis Petrowitz (born 1690, died 1718) was the son of Peter the Great and his first wife, Eudoxia, and is said to have been a studious youth, averse to martial pursuits. In 1716 he retired to Vienna and Naples for refuge from the dreadful ire of the Czar. This act was treated as a crime by his father, and Alexis was induced to return. After renouncing his rights to the throne he was condemned to death on a charge of meditated rebellion in 1718. He was found dead in prison ten days after his sentence was pronounced.



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“Pahlen, you outrage my father!”

“Ah! Monseigneur, it is not his heart that I accuse; that is full of generosity and of the most noble sentiments. But the violence of his temper excites him continually. You know, as well as I, that the emperor seeks the good without being able to attain it. What will become of the imperial family? What will be the fate of the nation, with its immense population, which heaven has destined you to govern and to protect, if your father, left to his excited imagination, — turning from one opinion to another, punishing, pardoning, recompensing without measure, without reflection, — retain the reins of government in his own hands? There is no longer time to hesitate, Monseigneur. The senate, the entire empire wishes to throw off this intolerable yoke, and confide its destinies to you. I am here only as the faithful interpreter of that wish.”

“What!” cried Alexander, retreating from Pahlen. “They wish me to usurp the sovereign power, to snatch the sceptre from the hands of my father? Never! I will be the victim of his errors if need be, without regret! Only save my mother! save the empress!”

Pahlen then, with atrocious duplicity, tried to make the grand duke understand how greatly the universal exasperation among all classes against the emperor himself was to be feared. Then he cited England for example, where they were disposed to confide the direction of the government to the Prince of Wales, although the mental condition of George III. was less alarming perhaps, in a country where sovereign authority was more restrained and was



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limited by laws, than in Russia where the will of the monarch was absolute.

"The grand duke," continued Pahlen, "employing the same moderation, could, without mounting the throne, take the reins of government, always being ready to return them to his father as soon as the health of the emperor is restored, and when he has recovered that calmness necessary for the performance of his important duties. Such are the views of the senate, of the army, and of the whole nation," repeated the adroit courtier.

"They shall never have my consent!" replied Alexander. "The will of my father alone can direct his destiny and mine." Then, drawing a crucifix from his bosom, he made Pahlen swear upon that sacred object that the life of the emperor should be respected and his will left free.

"Monseigneur," replied Pahlen, "three days will without doubt decide the fate of your Imperial Highness, that of your august mother, and of all Russia."

On quitting the grand duke, Pahlen placed several guards at his door with an officer. The same day, the Emperor Paul, who had for a long time abandoned his family, went to pass the evening with the Princess Gagarin.<sup>1</sup> He was melancholy and his features were altered. During the conversation he let fall these terrible words, which his heart without doubt did not indorse, which he could never have fulfilled, and which a violent passion alone could have made

<sup>1</sup> Princess Gagarin, née Princess Anna Lapouchine (born 1777, died 1850), at one time mistress of Paul I., was the wife of Prince Paul Gavrilovitch Gagarin.

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him utter: "In a few days heads shall fall which have been very dear to me!"

The Princess Gagarin, being terrified, thought it her duty to warn the Grand Duke Alexander of the danger. One can imagine the cruel anxieties and the mental tortures which Alexander must have suffered. After his interview with the grand duke, Pahlen felt that there was no time to be lost to insure the success of the conspiracy. Assembling the conspirators, he addressed them in the language of all revolutionists, ancient and modern: "Let us not hesitate to show ourselves worthy of our country by declaring ourselves her liberators!"

The appointed rendezvous was at Platon Zouboff's. Invoking the shade of Brutus, the conspirators stimulated their courage by copious draughts of wine. During that same evening Pahlen saw the emperor, and in language adroitly prepared he persuaded him that the conspiracy was at an end; he succeeded also in tranquillizing him, and in pouring the balm of consolation into the heart of the ill-fated monarch.

Finally, when night had come, the conspirators, wrapped in their cloaks and almost all having their brains filled with the fumes of the wine which they had drunk, took their way in silence toward the Palace Michaelovski. As they crossed the garden which surrounds the palace, a flock of crows roosting on the trees flew up, uttering their inauspicious cries. The croaking of these birds, which is considered a bad omen in Russia, frightened the conspirators, and they considered for a moment whether they should not give up the enterprise.

Pahlen had changed the guards of the palace and

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in their place had stationed as sentinels officers belonging to the conspirators. The entire Imperial Guard was under arms in different parts of the city according to his orders. One single sentinel, having been overlooked, seeing the group which was approaching, cried, "To arms!" and was about to rush out, when he was immediately recalled by the accomplices of Pahlen. The conspirators, having arrived without hindrance, mounted the steps of the grand staircase, where reigned, as in the entire palace, a melancholy silence.

It was midnight. Paul, having passed the evening with the Princess Gagarin, slept peacefully, relying on the trustworthiness of Pahlen. No trace was to be seen of those precautions which unrestful and suspicious tyranny invents and multiplies. After traversing the long suite of apartments without anything having arrested their steps, the conspirators were about to enter the sleeping-room of the emperor. Pahlen, scarcely breathing, watched the expression and countenance of each conspirator, listened intently to each sound, when suddenly in the chamber which preceded that of the emperor, a body-guard, — a Pole by birth, who was on watch, wrapped in his mantle, — perceiving the troop at that hour of the night, and suspecting evil intentions, sprang in front of the conspirators. Upon their refusing to retire, he drew his pistol, upon which they fell upon him and threw him down. At this noise the emperor awoke. Believing himself betrayed, he sprang out of bed and ran to a trap-door which served as means of communication with the apartments on the ground-floor. By some mischance, for the first time perhaps, the

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spring did not respond to the pressure of the foot. Where should he flee? What should he do? The only door in the room except the main entrance led to the apartment of the empress, but that was locked. The unhappy prince, victim of his own folly, had himself cut off all chance of escape.

At length the principal door opens, and Paul has only time to hide himself behind a corner of the chimney. The conspirators rush into the chamber. Their first look is toward the emperor's bed; it is empty. Finally they discover the emperor, who, believing flight impossible, calls Pahlen as his last hope. But the traitor does not answer to that appeal. He was not in the room; he was watching each movement of the conspirators from the outside. Assuming a courage which perhaps did not exist in his heart, Paul spoke to the conspirators.

"Paul Petrowitz," answered the traitors, "you see in us the organ of the senate and of the empire. Take this paper, read it, and decide your own fate."

At these words the emperor, terribly agitated, received the act of abdication presented him by Zouboff.

By the pale light of the night-lamp which flickers upon the troubled features of the emperor and upon the gloomy and ferocious faces of the conspirators, Paul reads the fatal document, reads it again; and as accusations of tyranny, specifications of his faults, expressions the most insulting and the least respectful constantly recur to strike the eye, and still more to wound the pride of the monarch, the dignity not only of the sovereign but of the man in him revolts. He throws the paper down. "No!" he cries; "rather death than dishonor!"

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He seeks again to escape the fury of the assassins, if not by flight, at least by a desperate defence; he seizes a weapon. Then commences a scene of horror and outrage which the pen refuses to describe. . . .

The stifled cries and groans, the muffled menacing sounds — the voice of crime — reach the ear of the alarmed wife. The empress hastily rises and runs to the door, but all efforts to open it are vain. Without loss of time she makes the tour of the apartments, and arrives trembling, despairing, on the staircase, which is filled with the assassins of her husband. Bennigsen,<sup>1</sup> who had been drawn into the plot, and who alone that night had been able to preserve the unalterable calmness of his demeanor, naturally very gentle, — Bennigsen advanced toward the empress and respectfully opposed her design to enter the chamber of the emperor. He showed her that she would only uselessly expose her own life, and that the days of Paul were ended. The empress was carried fainting to her own apartment.

The emperor in fact breathed his last as Pahlen entered, sword in hand, undecided still whether to use it to save the life of his master, or to participate in the crime. The sight of his dead benefactor really made some impression upon that atrocious and perfidious soul. He was obliged to support himself against a pillar, and remained there immovable for some moments, his sword hanging at his side and

<sup>1</sup> Count Levin August Theophil Bennigsen (born 1745, died 1826) was a celebrated commander in the Russian service. In 1788 he fought against Turkey, and in 1798 against the Poles. He commanded at the battle of Eylau. In 1813 he was in command of the army of the reserve and was soon after created count.

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his face covered. The other conspirators imitated his silence. Finally Bennigsen represented to them the necessity of going to pay homage to the new sovereign.

The tumult, noise, and disorder always attendant on such a tragic event resounded even to the palace of Alexander, where he reposed by the side of his young wife. Struck with terror and filled with the most dreadful presentiments, when he heard the death of his father proclaimed he fainted. Upon recovering his senses, Alexander saw the conspirators kneeling about him, trying to justify their deed by a thousand incoherent words, and attempting to attribute the death of Paul to a stroke of apoplexy, a natural consequence of his extreme violence.

"Monsters!" cried Alexander, "I will not accept a crown stained with the blood of my father!" and he fled and shut himself up in the most remote part of the palace.

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## CHAPTER II

**A**N immense crowd of people and bodies of soldiers having assembled under the walls of the palace, they called with loud cries for their new sovereign. The conspirators, appalled and in consternation, did not know what to do. Finally Bennigsen agreed to go to the emperor, who, not believing him culpable, allowed him to come into his presence. Bennigsen, throwing himself at the feet of Alexander, begged him to yield to the wishes of the people, and not to excite the murmurs and license of the Imperial Guard by longer resistance, and by leaving in such cruel anarchy this powerful empire which destiny had called him to govern.

Conquered at last by the representations of Bennigsen, and still more by the tears of his mother and his wife and by the prayers of his beloved brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, Alexander yielded, and consented to show himself to the multitude.

Pale and exhausted, the new monarch was carried almost inanimate into the presence of his soldiers, where he received their oaths of allegiance, which, repeated by thousands of voices, seemed to make the death of his father a thousand times more tragic.

The conspirators, ignorant still of what treatment they had to expect, retired to their own homes, strong, if not by the approval of their own consciences, at least by the approbation of public opinion, which they believed to be entirely on their side, by

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the approbation of their country, of which they called themselves the liberators, and above all by that of their party, which was as extensive as powerful.

Pahlen was soon condemned to exile on his estates. "I expected it," he said, "and my trunks are all packed in advance." The other conspirators were also exiled to different provinces of the empire, and in spite of the mildness of the punishment, they all considered themselves persecuted heroes, victims and martyrs to their patriotism.

Perhaps many will, on the contrary, be astonished that Alexander did not act with greater severity against the assassins of his father. It must be remembered that the penalty of death did not exist at that time in Russia. Exile, confiscation of property, imprisonment, and disgrace were the only punishments known. Such a deed merited without doubt a law for itself, but no such law existed. Let us represent to ourselves, if possible, the situation in which Alexander found himself. Ascending the throne so young, he had only hopes and promises to offer his people, for the restraint and dependence in which his father had held him had never given him an opportunity to show the public the extent of his abilities, his aptitude for work, and the clearness of his mind and judgment.

In the first years of his reign, Alexander could only oppose with gentleness, perseverance, and conciliation, the dangerous fermentation with which the unhappy death of Paul filled the minds of the nation. That death seemed to be the victory of license over despotism, and was expected to lead to great concessions of autocratic power. An aristocratic con-



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stitution was already talked of, in which, without doubt, the interests of the people would have little weight in the balance, and in which the only endeavor would be to restrain sovereign authority. Conspiracy had struck deep root, especially in the army and among the Imperial Guards, and Alexander saw for a long time the sword of Damocles hanging over his head. Many of the conspirators, who had behaved with such atrocious barbarity, were in league with some of the most important personages of the empire. Moreover, it must be confessed, unfortunately, there reigned at St. Petersburg a universal satisfaction, and people spoke with an audacious freedom extolling the guilty.

We are acquainted with persons still living attached by sentiments of gratitude and affection to the memory of the ill fated Paul I., whose frailties they had at the same time to acknowledge and deplore; these persons voluntarily banished themselves from society, because they could not meet certain individuals, and see them received with general goodwill, without a feeling of horror. Who had passed sentence on the guilty? Who had led them to the scaffold? The emperor was obliged to restrain a desire for just vengeance, and to yield to the solicitations of a few faithful servants, strangers to the conspiracy, who placed clearly before his eyes the dangers which the State and the imperial family would incur if they employed rigorous measures against that party.

Without openly opposing the new opinions, it was necessary to lead back the public mind by methods of prudence and moderation into the path of duty.

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This was a work requiring wisdom such as that of which Alexander has given so many proofs during the whole course of his glorious reign. History can never reproach this prince with having shown a culpable clemency toward the murderers of his father, of having voluntarily left their crime unpunished. We have seen princes contemporaneous with Alexander—good and pious princes—constrained by reasons of state, not only to admit to their presence, but to honor with their confidence as minister, one of the criminal promoters of the death of Louis XVI.

The accession of Alexander to the throne was signalled by many acts of justice and benevolence. In response to his generous voice the deserts of Siberia sent back numerous exiles, eager to mingle their acclamations with those of an entire people filled with hope and joy.

Alexander banished from his court the excessive and rigorous etiquette which had been introduced in the preceding reign; among others, the custom of descending from one's carriage when one met the emperor. No person had been exempted from this usage either on account of age, sex, or rank. The first round hat which appeared in the streets of St. Petersburg is said to have created quite a sensation.

Freedom to travel outside the country was granted to every one in the empire, without distinction. The system of employing spies and informers was no longer feared. Art and literature, being no longer in fetters, hastened to render homage to their august protector. Submitted to fixed rules and to wise and well-conceived discipline, the army commenced finally to breathe freely, although Alexander showed perhaps too much

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love of minor details, and attached too much importance to small outside matters, often imperceptible to a less experienced eye than his own. But it would be difficult to blame his methods, remembering that they proceeded from a sense of order and exactness, and that it is to him especially that the Russian army owes its fine military bearing, and that perfect discipline which has justly made it the admiration of all Europe, and that it owes also to him those successes of which Russia has a right to be proud.

People living in the country, sure of finding in their young sovereign justice and protection, were happy to see him honor agriculture and interest himself in its progress, by establishing on his own estates settlements of foreign workmen, whose efforts he encouraged in the hope of propagating and extending true prosperity throughout the whole empire.

The towns found also an assured guarantee of prosperity in the love of Alexander for the arts, and in the protection he gave to commerce. The young emperor gave all his attention at first to putting in order the finances of the State, which the luxurious profusion of the Empress Catherine and the prodigal generosity of Paul I. had cruelly deranged. He soon reaped the fruits of his labor, by re-establishing the national credit.

Such was the happy beginning of the reign of Alexander. This prince accorded and assured to his subjects all the liberty which they could reasonably expect; and in all his attempts, one recognizes the wise teachings of the philosopher La Harpe. Some people, filled with the new ideas of the age,

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try to see in the intentions of Alexander a secret tendency to advanced liberal ideas, toward which his old instructor had directed the mind of the young prince destined to command one day fifty millions of people; but Russia, happy and satisfied, found — using a clever expression of Mme. de Staël's — “a perfect constitution in the character of her sovereign.” Every one knows the charming reply which Alexander made to that celebrated woman, — a reply which so well expressed his sentiments. “I shall be, in any case,” he said, “only a fortunate accident.”

Notwithstanding his youth, his inexperience, and his natural inclination to philanthropic sentiments, Alexander had too much wisdom, too much depth of mind, not to see that Russia was, if one may be allowed to use the comparison, still too young a tree to receive the graft of new institutions. He hoped much from the future, from his care and perseverance, and above all from time, which alone could accomplish and establish a great change in the form of government; but time, inexorable time, would not tarry for him, and madmen, monsters, ungrateful cowards have hastened its course — Ah! forbid the thought; its bitterness mingles itself in the recital of the events of these beautiful years of Alexander!

Let us turn to the young monarch visiting the different parts of his vast empire, appearing everywhere to his subjects as the amiable, benevolent prince, the future great man, destined by Providence to be the arbiter of Europe, and to overthrow that colossus of power which was to weigh upon her in the person of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Everywhere brilliant festivals and entertainments

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marked the passage of the young emperor. Alexander honored with his presence those which were given at that time at Vilna, the capital of Lithuania. Being then too young, I had not the happiness of seeing him, but I learned even then to honor his royal name.

I remember that in the programme of solemnities which took place on that occasion, the municipal authorities planned to have the carriage of the emperor drawn into the town by men. Several persons of the prince's suite who had preceded him to Vilna tried to make it understood that such homage was unpleasant to his Majesty; but to no effect. The town authorities did not wish to lose the expense of the costumes which had been made for the twenty men chosen from the burghers, who were to form that singular team. These poor people ran therefore with great zeal to attach themselves to the carriage of the emperor at the place a little distance from Vilna where the prince had just received the different deputations from the town; and starting off with redoubled speed they arrived at the castle, drawing, instead of the emperor, his Majesty's valet and his coachman, who, gravely seated on the box, drove them like real horses. Feeling a natural repugnance to letting himself be drawn by his fellow-men, the emperor had entered the carriage of one of his aides-de-camp.

On leaving Vilna, Alexander crossed the river in a ferry boat. One of the boatmen wounded himself so seriously as to cause anxiety to those who were witnesses of the accident, especially to his Majesty, who regarded himself in a measure as the cause of

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the misfortune to the poor man. He insisted upon dressing the wound with his own hands, and tore his handkerchief into bandages. This scene took place on the boat, and this mark of feeling in the prince was immediately immortalized by the brush and pencil of every artist in the country.

In going from Vilna to Grodno the emperor stopped to change horses at one of my father's farms. While they were harnessing the new relay, Alexander, walking about among the stables which were of rather remarkable architecture, noticed a large coachman's-whip freshly painted and varnished.

He had the fancy of a young man to try the whip. A little stable-boy who was there, not recognizing the emperor, and probably finding his pleasant and prepossessing countenance infinitely less formidable than that of the big-moustached coachman, owner of the whip, tried to take the whip from the hands of Alexander, saying, "Don't touch that whip, for it belongs to Mr. Theodore." The emperor, amused at the boldness of the little chap, who had a waggish manner and a pretty face, asked him if Mr. Theodore would take a ducat for his whip. The little boy undertook the negotiation and promised to remit the price to the owner. The business having been concluded, the emperor rolled up the whip handily and put it in his carriage, saying it was for his favorite coachman, the faithful Houchka.

The emperor, in travelling, generally had himself driven, for safety, by his own coachmen. He who was driving the imperial carriage at this time wished to try the horses before the emperor got in. They were large, strong stallions. No sooner had they

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felt the reins and the Russian whip to which they were not accustomed, than they began to kick and rear, and would have broken the carriage in pieces if the people from the stables had not run to the rescue. My father's equerry having begged to be allowed to have the horses driven in the Polish fashion, Mr. Theodore took the reins, and the emperor was driven without accident to the next relay.

The philanthropic character of the emperor seemed to promise uninterrupted peace to his happy subjects. No idea of conquest or ambition had thus far entered the head of this young sovereign, to the great astonishment of all who surrounded him, and to that of all Europe, no doubt. That which was not less remarkable was the admiration which he involuntarily felt for the man whose character could in no way be in sympathy with his own. But it must be admitted that that prestige of glory and power which then surrounded Napoleon was well calculated to seduce the imagination with all the fascination of the marvellous.

Alexander could not consider as a usurper the extraordinary man who, having rescued France from the abyss of revolution, continued still to direct her destiny under the modest title of consul. Later, Napoleon said that he found the crown of France on the ground and took it up. He would have been without doubt more just, more noble, in taking it up, to have restored it to the Bourbons, who had not let it fall, since it had been wrested from them; but the soldier of fortune found the crown and made himself emperor.



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Alexander, wishing to hold amicable relations with France, followed up the negotiations cut off in the preceding reign, and sent Count Markoff to Paris. The principal object of Markoff's mission was to come to an understanding with the French government upon the system of indemnities in favor of the German princes who had been stripped or robbed by the last treaty with Austria, whether by means of exchange or by the secularization of the goods of the ecclesiastics. It appeared also in his instructions that Markoff should do all in his power to establish and maintain good feeling between France and England. It was thought that a war between those two countries would necessarily disturb the peace and prosperity of all Europe. Markoff had been employed during the reign of Catherine only in negotiations with the Turks, who were always the conquered, or with the Poles, who, though courageous, were always obliged to yield to force. He was lacking in tact and circumspection. Everything about him was disagreeable, his tone, his manner, and his character. He inspired the confidence of neither France, England, nor Germany. When England broke the treaty of Amiens and declared war against France, Markoff was so sure that Lord Mitford would accept the conditions of the first consul that he risked and lost a considerable sum of the public funds.

Finally, Bonaparte, tired of the presence of that diplomatic personage, had him recalled to St. Petersburg. The Emperor Alexander showed a good deal of character on this occasion; he sent Markoff the order of St. Andrew, leaving him at liberty to



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return to St. Petersburg or remain in Paris. But Markoff, instead of imitating the firmness of his royal master, hastened his departure, saying he did not dare to prolong his stay in Paris for fear of being poisoned. Oubril replaced him as *chargé d'affaires* until that disastrous event happened which destroyed the harmony that had existed between the governments of France and Russia. The assassination of the unhappy Duc d'Enghien proved, even to the admirers of Napoleon, of what terrible excesses ambition could render him capable. All Europe shuddered with horror at that deed by which the most sacred rights were violated.

Sharing that just indignation, Alexander, as prince of the empire, sent a note to the diet of Ratisbon to demand reparation for the violation of the territory of the electorate of Baden. But what reparation is possible when the wrong is without remedy? The Duc d'Enghien was dead.

Austria and Russia declared war against France. The successes of Napoleon in that campaign are too well known for me to recount them. Austria remembers them only too well. The Emperor Alexander had confided the command of his troops to Kotousoff;<sup>1</sup> but he was present himself at the battle

<sup>1</sup> Michael Laurionovitch Golenitchef Kotousoff (Kutusov) (born 1745, died 1813) served against the Poles and Turks, and rose to be lieutenant-general in 1789. In 1793 he was ambassador to Constantinople, and on the accession of Paul I. was charged with a mission to Berlin. After the assassination of the czar he was appointed governor-general of St. Petersburg, and in 1805 was created commander-in-chief of the first corps of the Russian army against the French. He gained a victory at Dürrenstein, and soon after commanded the Allied Army under the Emperor Alexander at Austerlitz. In 1812, a few days before the battle of Borodino, he

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of Austerlitz, lost through the non-arrival of the corps of the Russian army commanded by Bennigsen, and the army of the Archduke Charles coming from Italy.

It is said that at the beginning of the battle a Russian colonel made prisoner by the French was brought to Napoleon, who asked him where the Emperor of Russia was. The Russian having satisfied the curiosity of Napoleon, the latter set him at liberty, charging him to beg the emperor on his part to change his position, as he was about to make a grand discharge of artillery on the side where Alexander had stationed himself.

I will not attempt to describe this battle, so glorious for the French army. I will only say that the young emperor showed great personal courage, exposing his life in several encounters where he had a horse killed under him in pushing to the midst of the retreat to rally his old grenadiers, who had fled, crying: "Sire, no one is in command here; flee, do not expose your life!" The emperor was then obliged to quit the field of battle with the mortification of a defeat, and with that which was still more painful to his sensitive heart, of having fruitlessly shed the blood of his subjects. "You must be in my place," said he one day, — "you must be in my place to know the responsibility of a sovereign, and what I feel in thinking that I must one day give account to God for the life of each one of my soldiers." These beautiful words are worthy to be

was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian army. For his victories the emperor bestowed upon him the title of Prince of Smolensk.

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engraved on marble and on brass, and to serve as a lesson to all the kings of the earth.

In passing through Prussian Poland on his return to Russia, the emperor was separated from his attendants and lost his way one winter night near the little village or borough of Miendsirzec. Learning that the lands belonged to Prince Constantine Czartoryski, whom, as well as his wife the Princess Angélique, *née* Radzivil,<sup>1</sup> he had known very well at St. Petersburg, he had himself conducted to the castle. Arriving almost alone in a little sledge, the emperor announced himself as an old friend of the prince, and asked to see him at once. The servants at first made some objections, judging from the modest appearance of the equipage; induced finally to yield, in spite of themselves, to the influence of the sovereign manner of him to whom they spoke, they went to waken their master and to inform him of the arrival of the unknown friend, who would not tell his name. Very much surprised in his turn, Prince Czartoryski rose, put on his dressing-gown, and descended to the salon, where he recognized *the friend*. The emperor would not allow them to waken the princess; he took only a cup of tea, accepted some linen, of which he was in need before he could reach his carriages, and departed at once for St. Petersburg. Upon his arrival at the capital of the empire, the senate saw fit to offer the

<sup>1</sup> The Princess Radzivil, palatine of Vilna, mother of the princess Czartoryski, and my aunt, a person of fine mind and graces of imagination, had made long sojourns at St. Petersburg. She was equally well received by the Empress Catherine II., who overwhelmed her with honors and gifts, by Paul I., and by Alexander I.

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emperor the grand order of St. George: but Alexander refused that reward of valor, saying modestly that he did not at all deserve it.

After this campaign Oubril, the Russian *chargé d'affaires* at Paris, made a treaty disadvantageous to Russia, which Alexander had the firmness not to ratify. In the meantime Prussia, which before had refused to enter into the coalition with Austria and Russia, alone and with extreme imprudence declared war against France. The battle of Jena, the death of the valiant prince Louis, and the taking of Berlin, were among the sad results of an undertaking in which without doubt there was more heroic exaltation than real and healthy policy. The beautiful Queen Louisa of Prussia, after having stimulated the courage of the Prussian soldiers, was obliged to flee; and being *enceinte* was transported on bales of cotton to the frontier of the country, — to Memel, where she remained, as well as the king, during the whole of this disastrous campaign. So it was in Prussia, and she would have suffered, perhaps, by a just retribution from Heaven, the fate of Poland, if her noble ally, the generous Alexander, had not come to her rescue.

The Russian army commanded by general Bennigsen held back the impetuous French troops accustomed to march from victory to victory. The success of the battles of Pultusk and of Preussich-Eylau were doubtful for the one as well as for the other army. Bennigsen closed the entrance of Lithuania against Napoleon. No general fighting against this great military genius had been able to claim such an advantage.



COUNT BENNIGSEN.



## Emperor Alexander I.

A great number of French prisoners were transported at that time to the interior of Russia and passed through Vilna. Their appearance excited among the Poles a sort of patriotic effervescence, which fortunately had no unhappy results, owing to the moderation and prudence of the governor-general and commander of Lithuania, Rymisky Korsakoff.<sup>1</sup>

Warsaw, at that epoch already occupied by the French, was regarded as the nucleus of a new Poland, and all the patriotic feelings, all the hopes of the Poles fastened themselves upon Napoleon as the only sovereign who had, not only the power, but the wish to re-establish the ancient kingdom of Poland. Mistaken in the crafty character of Bonaparte, the Poles believed they saw in each French soldier the instrument of the re-establishment of their nation. As such the prisoners of whom I have just spoken were received throughout Lithuania, and especially at Vilna, with such lively and exaggerated marks of interest that it was impossible to attribute it to humanity alone. They deprived themselves of clothes, linen, money, everything, for them. The market-women gave the French soldiers their provisions for nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Michailovitch Rymisky Korsakoff (Korsakov) (born 1753, died 1840). In his youth he entered the army, taking part in the campaign against France in the Low Countries. Later he served with distinction under Zubov in the war against Persia. On the accession of Paul I. he was named lieutenant-general and sent with 30,000 men to support Souvarof in Switzerland. Before he could effect a union he was overwhelmingly defeated by Massena at Zurich (1799). Two years later he was promoted to general of infantry, and a little later was named Governor-general of Moscow. By the kindness and humanity of his administration he won the respect and friendship of all.

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People went to visit the officers, who were always in sight. On the day of their departure everybody was eager to send them an abundance of provisions, and a crowd assembled at the house which they occupied to see them off. The inhabitants conducted them on foot for several stages of the journey, and a livery-stable-keeper furnished gratuitously thirty horses and sledges to carry the French several miles from Vilna.

The battle of Friedland in the spring of 1807 terminated the Prussian campaign. The treaty of Tilsit, in fixing the boundaries of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, disappointed the hopes of the Poles, without succeeding, however, in extinguishing them entirely. The interview between the two sovereigns took place, it is said, upon a boat in the middle of the Niemen, in the presence of both armies drawn up in most brilliant array on opposite sides of the river. It is said also that Napoleon on perceiving Alexander, struck with the beauty of that prince, exclaimed, "It is Apollo!" It was at this interview that Alexander for the first time gave Napoleon the title of emperor, and majesty, whom until then he had not recognized as the ruler of the French nation.

The boat belonged to Napoleon. After the first compliments and the reciprocal presentations of the Grand Duke Constantine and Murat, then Grand Duke of Berg, Napoleon naturally wished to do the honors of the meeting-place for the conference to the Emperor of Russia. Alexander claimed that he was on his own shore, Napoleon that he was on his own boat. To put an end to ceremonious controversy, Alexander said, "Very well, we will enter to-



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gether." As the door was very narrow, the two sovereigns were obliged to squeeze themselves together to enter at the same time. It was observed that they were very animated as they left the place of this conference, whose results were known later. Upon his return to his own shore, Napoleon, in compliment to the Emperor of Russia, made the whole French army cry, "*Hourra !*" In response to this politeness, the Emperor Alexander made sign to his own to cry, "*Vive l'Empereur Napoleon !*" The officers who knew French cried as they were ordered, but the Russian soldiers responded by their accustomed cry, and the two banks of the Niemen resounded with "*hourras*."

The conference lasted a number of days, during which the sovereigns visited each other reciprocally. Alexander even dined several times with Napoleon, who would never in his turn show the same proof of confidence, saying, to justify his fear: "I am not as good as you, sire, and I fear the people by whom you are surrounded." Once only he had the fancy to ask for tea. "You are so near China," he said to the Russian emperor, "you ought to have excellent tea." But when it was brought, he pretended to put the cup to his lips, then put it down without having tasted a drop.

When the Emperor Alexander dined at the French camp with several persons of his suite, the servants carried the dishes of gold and placed them on Napoleon's table, passing through two lines of grenadiers, who allowed no one to approach for fear they might throw poison into the food.

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## CHAPTER III

IN acceding to the continental system which Napoleon attempted to force upon Europe as the only means of opposing England,—that power that was so proud of her *impregnable* position and always jealous of the glory of the great captain,—the Emperor Alexander bought the peace of Tilsit at the price of a sacrifice much more costly for his empire than an unsuccessful campaign would have been. Little it mattered to Napoleon if all Europe suffered, so long as his hate and ambition were satisfied. Tranquil in regard to Russia, which he had now placed under the yoke of his policy, Bonaparte turned his ambitious looks towards Spain.

The Russian emperor at this time received the King and Queen of Prussia at St. Petersburg. On this occasion he displayed a grandeur, magnificence, and generous hospitality like that shown by Louis XIV. in receiving the unfortunate James II. and his family, when banished from England. Sumptuous equipages and furs of great price were prepared for their Majesties and their followers, and awaited them on the frontier of the country. The King and Queen of Prussia made their entry into St. Petersburg in a state carriage.

Notwithstanding the intense cold, the troops were under arms before five o'clock in the morning. All the most illustrious and distinguished personages of St. Petersburg awaited the royal travellers at court.

# Emperor Alexander I.

It is related that the Emperor Alexander, giving his arm to the Queen of Prussia, encountered in one of the galleries of the palace the beautiful Madame N.,<sup>1</sup> clothed in a simple gown of white crape, and with no ornament on her magnificent black hair except a wreath of those flowers called forget-me-nots. This lady then and for a long time after occupied the heart of Alexander, without any other merit in his eyes than the charm of her beauty. In recalling a weakness unhappily too well known, we attempt not to justify it, — if it can be justified, — but to prove that the virtues of Alexander have effaced its memory.

Married so young, and naturally endowed with lively passions, friendship alone was not enough to fill a heart too warm and too open to the dangerous impressions of love. Perhaps, also, the pride of a more constant heart, wounded in its dearest affections, did not permit Elizabeth to employ those means which reason alone would have suggested to her, to bring back the love of her husband. While she suppressed her complaints and affected a calm and serene manner, she was often surprised bathed in tears, contemplating the portrait of that Alexander, so lovable and so unfaithful. Ah! to find him less culpable, let us turn our regards from the sorrows of

<sup>1</sup> Madame Narishkin was the prima donna of St. Petersburg in beauty, talents, and accomplishments. Her husband was the Grand Huntsman of the court, and through the mother of Peter the Great claimed relationship to the imperial family. Her father, a Polish nobleman, claimed descent from the ancient royal family of Russia, and her mother was more nearly related to the imperial house. She had no influence in politics and never mixed in them. Her triumph over Alexander was of short duration.

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the angelic Elizabeth! As a man, Alexander had the weaknesses of men. Perfection without blemish is not compatible with human nature. If Alexander did not attain to it in all respects in his private life, what other mortal dare hope to attain to it? But, at least, no one will accuse him of having attempted to seduce innocence. He always knew how to respect and honor merit and virtue, and he avoided scandal. He was never known to squander the revenues of the State in mad profligacy, or to allow any favorite to gain a dangerous influence over his mind. Finally, he renounced his errors at an age when the passions still preserve a fatal power, at the age when Louis XIV. was under the influence of Madame de Montespan and the beautiful Fontanges, and much younger than Henri IV. when that king, so great in spite of his weaknesses, disguised as a lackey ran after the carriage of the charming Princess of Condé.

Not only were the King and Queen of Prussia as well as their suite entertained during their stay at St. Petersburg by the emperor, but they were constantly made the objects of the most delicate attention and royal courtesy. Sumptuous festivities were given on that occasion at the winter palace, among which were fire-works which cost immense sums, and a ball at which there were twenty thousand persons dressed in fancy costumes. The Queen of Prussia appeared in a superb Russian costume worth one hundred thousand rubles, which she found on her toilet just before the ball. It was thus that Alexander honored and respected the royal unfortunates.

Ambition, which was the food of Napoleon's genius, led him to ask of the Emperor Alexander a second in-

## Emperor Alexander I.

terview. Their meeting took place this time at Erfurt. It was there, it is said, that this unscrupulous man, insatiable of glory and conquests, unrolled to the eyes of the wise and moderate monarch his gigantic plan for the division of the world, in renewing the empire of the East and of the West. If that project did not succeed, its failure must be attributed to the moderation of Alexander. What a formidable union that would have been, with the military genius of Napoleon united with the forces of Russia! The infatuation of Alexander for Napoleon, the fascination which he exercised, kept up by that victorious career to which all yielded, was not yet dissipated.

It is said that during this conference at Erfurt, Alexander was present with Napoleon at a representation of *Œdipus*, and suddenly at this line,—

“ *L’amitié d’un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,*” —

he rose and kissed Napoleon. I cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote, but I have heard the Emperor Alexander say that during his stay at Erfurt he had been overwhelmed with continual representations of tragedies, and that he attributed this melancholy taste to the sombre and tragic character of Napoleon.

A short time after the interview at Erfurt, Napoleon, having had his marriage with Josephine dissolved, and desiring to strengthen and perpetuate his dynasty on the throne by a brilliant and durable alliance, asked of the Emperor of Russia his sister the Grand Duchess Catherine <sup>1</sup> in marriage. Alexander

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Paulowna (born 1788, died 1819). She was a daughter of Paul I., and in 1809 married Prince George, Duke of Oldenburg,

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seemed disposed to accede to these views of Napoleon, but the dowager Empress Marie and the young princess herself—both women of great character, and who had always disapproved of the continental system, which Alexander had adopted in spite of himself—showed in this affair such firmness and resistance that Alexander was forced to yield, and Napoleon, for the first time since his elevation, had to submit to a refusal. Here was also his first experience of the inconstancy of fortune. His brilliant marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise effaced for the time his sense of humiliation, and filled his heart with new pride in making him believe in the stability of his fortune. However, its limit was already marked by Providence; it was in the wilds of Russia, it was by the light of the burning of Moscow, in the midst of the snows and frosts of the North, that misfortune was to seize its illustrious prey, to pour upon his own head the evils which his ambition had inflicted upon the world, and to make him submit to a slow and cruel death upon a rock, in the midst of the ocean,—him who complained *that he suffocated in old Europe*.

Finally, the Emperor Alexander, after three years of peace, uncertain as to results, determined, if not to declare war against the French, at least to renounce the continental system. One could scarcely flatter himself that Napoleon would be tractable on this important point of his policy.

It was equally impossible for Alexander to close

who died in 1812. She was married in 1816 to the Prince of Würtemberg, who became King Wilhelm I. She was a favorite sister of Alexander and is said to have been endowed with noble and amiable qualities.

## Emperor Alexander I.

his eyes any longer to the sad condition to which the absolute cessation of commerce had reduced the empire. What limit, moreover, could any one assign to this system, even more oppressive for those who had undertaken it than for those against whom it was directed? Had not England her colonies, her ships, all the seas at her disposition? Was not her policy of constantly opposing France far superior to that of Napoleon, who only knew how to act with bombs and cannon and with millions of men? Finally, as a last resource, had she not Spain and Wellington?

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## CHAPTER IV

THE year 1812 saw the most memorable events which history has ever recorded.

The Emperor Alexander, who since his accession to the throne had only once honored Vilna with his presence, announced suddenly that he chose that town as his headquarters. The different corps of the army from all parts of Russia were gathered together at different points of Lithuania. The emperor had just terminated the conquest of Finland, and his friendly relations with Marshal Bernadotte, then prince royal of Sweden, reassured him against any kind of dangerous diversion on the North. Kotousoff, conqueror of Moldavia, had terminated a glorious campaign in concluding a favorable treaty with the Turks.

Although the secrets of the cabinet were well guarded, it was easy to see that France was the object of all these movements, that war was about to break out; but where would be the theatre of it? That was what no one could foresee, for no news whatever from without was brought into the interior of the country, not even to the headquarters. With his ordinary prudence the emperor had thought that his abode in Lithuania, the attraction of his presence, his affability and kindness would draw to him the hearts of all the Lithuanians, and would be to them a certain antidote against the allurements which Napoleon seemed disposed to offer to their patriotism.



## Emperor Alexander I.

Alexander arrived at Vilna at the beginning of March, 1812. It is principally with this time that my recollections of this excellent prince are connected. I beg my readers in advance to spare me the reproach of vanity if, in speaking of the emperor, I find myself obliged to speak of myself. You will only see the humble lily of the fields beside the stately cedar!

My father, having to give up to his Highness the Grand Duke Constantine the house which he occupied, changed his quarters and sent me to a country place not far from Vilna, to stay with friends. In going out of the town I was struck with the misery of the country people, whom privation of the absolute necessities of life by the interruption of trade, the bad harvests of the preceding year, and the continual passage of troops and transports had entirely ruined. The trades-people were obliged to furnish the magazines of the army with provisions, and were paid in promises made in very uncertain terms. The evil, as is always the case, weighed most heavily on the poor. The peasants lost their horses, and even their cattle. This sad spectacle, I remember, put me in bad humor with the emperor, as if he had been the cause of the evils which are always the forerunners of war, not to speak of the plagues which are the inevitable followers of it. It was the time of Lent, which is observed rigorously throughout the empire, even by the emperor himself. It was not possible to celebrate the presence of the emperor by brilliant entertainments, but the emperor often accorded to certain persons of the nobility of Vilna the honor of dining with them. In the morning his Majesty occupied

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himself with the affairs of state, received or sent off couriers, was present at the parade and military exercises, and took long rides on horseback into the country about Vilna, which he found delightful.

In a lovely retreat, made beautiful by friendship and all that art could devise, my friends and I learned that the emperor was about to inspect a body of troops quartered at Scawle and Semogitie, and that we should have the pleasure of seeing him, as he must necessarily pass Towiany, a place remarkable for the beauty of its castle and its English gardens, and for having several times had the honor of the presence of its sovereign. Forty horses were sent and kept there for his Majesty. Not knowing whether the emperor would only change horses or remain to dine there, Count Moriconi and his wife made preparations accordingly. I acknowledge that the great stir and bustle which always announces and precedes the arrival of a sovereign, the news no sooner received than denied, the comings and goings, the orders and counter-orders, the movements of the couriers, *valets de chambre*, lieutenants of the police, the directors of the post, generals, etc., which followed each other like lightning, — all this was very amusing. I never laughed so much, and must acknowledge that I was well seconded by my young friends, and that very little was sufficient to excite our mirth.

Finally, on the 27th of April, 1812, the emperor arrived at Towiany, about seven o'clock in the evening, in an open calash. He always travelled thus, in all kinds of weather by night as well as by day. He was received on the steps by Count Moriconi.

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On seeing this venerable old gentleman, dressed in the uniform of a commander of Malta, who was hardly able to stand (for he had been paralyzed for several years), the emperor perceived at once that he was suffering, and with an air of kindness and solicitude sustained the count as they ascended the steps. Seeing the mistress of the house, her two nieces and myself, his Majesty excused himself most politely for appearing in undress uniform, not expecting to see ladies. Then giving his arm to the Countess Moriconi to enter the drawing-room, the emperor offered to kiss her hand. Madame de Moriconi, out of respect, would not allow that mark of politeness, which she had not expected, and as she was very short and courtesied very low, the emperor on his side bowed almost to the ground, which gave me again such a desire to laugh that I could hardly restrain myself.

Madame de Moriconi then presented her two nieces, Mademoiselle Grabowska, now Princess Radzivil,<sup>1</sup> Mademoiselle Dorothée Moriconi, now Countess Lopacinska, and me. The emperor asked the ladies to sit down, and compelled the old count to do so, placing him himself in an arm-chair with touching care. He remained standing, spoke of Vilna, and said many polite things of the society he found

<sup>1</sup> Radzivil was one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most influential families in Poland. The family was a large one and was united in its devotion to the existence of the kingdom. Charles Radzivil (died 1790) supported a small army out of his own purse. Michel Geron Radzivil (born 1778, died 1850) was enrolled in the Polish army under Kosciusko. In 1812 he fought against Russia, and after the battles of Smolensk and Witepsk he was made a general of brigade by Napoleon. When Paris was occupied by the Allies he returned to Poland. He took an active part in the revolution of 1830.

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there and the ball they had given him on the eve of his departure. In answer to these compliments we felt it our duty to speak of St. Petersburg; the emperor asked us if we knew it, and upon our negative answer, "Well, ladies," he said, "I invite you to come there, and I hope it will correspond with the opinion you have already formed of it." He repeated several times that he was ashamed to be in such dress in the presence of ladies, and related a similar thing which had happened to him on his arrival near Warsaw, at Willanow, the ancient habitation of King John Sobieski. "I arrived there sound asleep," said the emperor. "What was my astonishment and confusion when, on wakening, I found myself surrounded by charming and beautiful ladies, in a brightly illuminated castle filled with souvenirs of King John."

The emperor complimented Madame Moriconi very much upon the beauty of the castle and park, upon which she asked him to look at the view from the window. The spring was late that year, and at the end of April there was no appearance of verdure. The hour for dinner had already passed, but his Majesty would only take a cup of tea, and soon, learning that the carriages were ready, he begged Madame Moriconi not to accompany him, and saluting each person of the house, ranged along his passage, he mounted his carriage with the grand marshal of the court, Count Tolstoi.

I acknowledge that I was very much struck, at first sight, with the good looks of the emperor, whose charm consisted especially in the mildness and expression of an open and pleasant counte-

## Emperor Alexander I.

nance. I must say also, in all simplicity, that I could not imagine a sovereign in an overcoat. Finally, if I may say it, I found him too amiable, not imposing enough, making one forget his rank too easily. I could not accustom myself to those exaggerated expressions of politeness, respect, and homage which he employed with ladies, which surpassed in my ideas all that is left us of the exquisite gallantry of Louis XIV.

We were told by General Armfeldt,<sup>1</sup> at that time commander in Finland, and by M. Czernischeff, aide-de-camp to his Majesty, that the emperor would return by Towiany. M. Czernischeff—to whom his journeys to Paris, and the secret messages with which he had been charged gave a sort of celebrity, to which he was not indifferent—seemed to worship the emperor, to whom he had given the surname the *Séduisant*. Three days after the departure of his Majesty a courier arrived from Scawle bringing a letter from Prince Wolkonski,<sup>2</sup> which announced that

<sup>1</sup> Gustav Mauritz Armfeldt (born 1759, died 1814) was a favorite of Gustavus III., and just before the death of that king in 1792 was appointed governor of Stockholm. In 1794 he was charged with treason by the regent, who, during the absence of Armfeldt on a mission to Naples, procured a sentence of death against him. He was restored to his former dignities by Gustavus IV. in 1799. Six years later he was appointed governor-general of Finland. In 1808 he commanded an army which was unsuccessful in its attempt to conquer Norway. Owing to persistent persecution by his enemies he entered the Russian service in 1810, and was appointed to several high offices by Alexander.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Pierre Mikhailovitch Wolkonski (Volkonsky) (born 1776, died 1852) was one of the most eminent generals in Russia, and his strong moral character gave him great influence. He was appointed aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Alexander in 1797, and served with distinction in the brilliant campaigns of 1805, 1812, 1813, and 1814. After the peace of Tilsit, Alexander presented him to Napoleon,

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the emperor proposed to come the next evening to ask Countess Moriconi for a cup of tea.

As the emperor was to stop at Vilkomir to be present at a review, the director-general of the post hinted that the countess would do well to ask his Majesty to pass the night at Towiany, where he would be incomparably better lodged than in a dirty little country town filled with Jews. He assured her that the emperor would gladly accept her invitation. Countess Moriconi, an elderly woman, not liking the constraint and trouble of etiquette, suffering also from a neglected cold, while answering that she did not deserve so much honor, gently pinched my arm to show me how much she was annoyed. It was necessary immediately to evacuate the apartments of the countess, of her nieces and their maids, to put them in order for the reception of the emperor. A crowd of maids old and young came and went, screaming, carrying, and upsetting everything; the confusion was most laughable. His Majesty's *valet de chambre*, who was filling a yellow morocco bag with hay, the ordinary bed of Alexander, who always slept on a hard bed, told us gravely that the emperor never allowed people to disturb themselves for him, and finally assured us condescendingly that everything would do *very well*. In the evening, as the lamps were being lighted, I saw from the window a company of peasants, men and women, returning from their work to their humble cottages, singing their plaintive Lithuanian airs. The simplicity and calmness of these good

who invited him to visit France and study the details of the organization of the army. Accordingly he lived abroad in the years 1808 and 1809. He was Russian ambassador to the court of Charles X.

## Emperor Alexander I.

people formed a contrast to the bustle and commotion in the castle which struck me, and I spoke of it to Madame Moriconi. As we stood there chatting some one came to say that the emperor had arrived. The mistress of the house rushed in quite out of breath; we made her sit down a moment, then ran all together to receive the emperor.

This time Alexander was in general's uniform embroidered with gold, with the scarf. It was no longer "the sovereign in an overcoat." He had stopped to dress at a farmhouse which belonged to the castle. Remembering that Madame Moriconi had been indisposed, he asked after her health and addressed a polite word to each of us. He said he had tried to reach Towiany in time for dinner, but the bad roads had made him late. Then Madame Moriconi made bold to ask the emperor if he would not do her the honor to accept her hospitality for the night. His Majesty replied that he would not give her that trouble, that he had his quarters at Vilkomir. Upon this, new entreaties, for we saw that the refusal came from delicacy. We now called Count Tolstoi to our aid; who, having learned that he was a relative of Madame Moriconi (his daughter married Prince Lubomirski, a nephew of that lady), immediately approached the emperor with that familiar tone which he allowed himself with him, and said: "Sire, you will have to consent to remain here, for I am to do the

<sup>1</sup> Count Ivan Ostermann Tolstoi (born 1770, died 1857) was a brilliant Russian general of artillery. In the bloody battle of Ostrowna, July 25, 1812, he showed great courage and skill when he was placed immediately opposite the troops of Murat and Prince Eugene; and again showed marked bravery at Baützen. His last years were passed in strict retirement near Genoa.



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honors as a relation." As the emperor seemed surprised, Tolstoi hastened to explain. Then his Majesty turning to Madame Moriconi said, "Madame, I am at your service, but I beg you not to disturb yourself for me."

We all sat in a circle. The emperor asked Madame Moriconi if she had not used a remedy for her cough very well known at St. Petersburg, which his physician would get for her, if she hadn't it. Count Tolstoi said he could cure a cold with jujube lozenges. The emperor made some joke about his "*doctoral*" propensities; adding that it would not always be safe to follow his advice. "What! sire, I have given those pastilles to *your mother*," answered Tolstoi. "The dowager empress never takes anything else when she has a cold."

The emperor then spoke of his tour in Lithuania, of several beautiful views on the river Niemen, of agriculture in general, etc. Madame Moriconi sustained the conversation very well. The emperor complimented her upon her knowledge of agriculture. He asked if we were musicians; Madame Moriconi said that her niece sang. He expressed a wish to hear her; everybody rose and Alexander placed himself near the piano. Mademoiselle Dorothée said to him she could hardly breathe for fear. "I beg you," he said, "just put the emperor aside." While she sang Alexander turned the leaves for her, and when the song was finished he complimented her on her talent. Then turning to me he asked me if I also was musical, but I hastened to say that I possessed only very moderate talent. He then talked for some time about music and singing, and spoke of Madame Frank,



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whose method he admired and whose voice was very beautiful and of great compass. He liked Romberg,<sup>1</sup> Rode,<sup>2</sup> Steibert,<sup>3</sup> and the opera "Romeo and Juliet;" to the last I had the boldness to prefer "Zingarella."

His Majesty regretted that the Empress Catherine had never allowed him to learn the violin, in spite of the taste he had for that instrument, that princess fearing with reason the loss of her grandson's time which the study of music would necessitate. The emperor told us also that at St. Petersburg, during Lent, they have only concerts, — and never balls, "our rite being more severe than yours," he said. He then begged Mademoiselle Dorothée, "if it was not imposing too much on her patience," to sing a national air.

In the meantime Prince Wolkonski arrived with Mr. Wylie.<sup>4</sup> The emperor joked them about their delay, saying that they must have travelled like snails. "His Majesty can laugh at us with good grace," said the prince to me; "he takes the best horses for his relays, leaving us only the poor ones."

"Do you know, Wylie," said Alexander to his physician, "Tolstoi is going to infringe upon your

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Romberg (born 1767, died 1821) was a celebrated German violinist and composer. In 1815 he became director of music at Gotha. He produced several sacred pieces and operas, and set to music Schiller's "Song of the Bell" and other poems.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Rode (born 1774, died 1830). A French violinist who composed concertos, which are much admired.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Steibelt (born 1756, died 1823) was a celebrated pianist and composer for the piano. He was patronized by Frederick the Great and became Imperial Chapel-Master at St. Petersburg.

<sup>4</sup> James Wylie (born 1768, died 1854) was a Russian physician of Scotch origin. He was Physician to the Emperor, Member of the Privy Council, President of the Military Sanitary Commission, and Member of the Academy of Surgery. He wrote several works on medicine.

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rights, and thinks of giving medical advice." The Englishman was puzzled, not knowing anything of the preceding conversation. Then followed an explanation in a form of pleasantry, which was very lively and agreeable.

While my friend sang I chatted with the new arrivals, of whom nobody thought, every one being occupied with the emperor. Approaching the piano I found the conversation had turned on foreign languages, of which the emperor maintained that the Poles spoke the most. He added that he liked Polish very much and also spoke it. I said that the Grand Duke Constantine was supposed to speak it perfectly, and even to write it. "Yes," replied the emperor, "my brother boasts about it, but I have never seen any of *his writings*, and he does not speak it very correctly."

The question of the analogy of the Russian and Polish languages was referred to, and the similarity of certain words, and the emperor, smiling, made me repeat some Russian words, which I did not pronounce very well.

Soon after Alexander proposed to retire, saying that he feared he was taxing us too much, and that we without doubt would like to rest. Seeing that no one dared to detain his Majesty, it occurred to me to say, "Your Majesty, then, takes us for real country people?" The good-natured prince commenced laughing, and turning to me: "No, certainly, I do not think that, but I believe it is a very good habit in the country to go to bed early." Then Tolstoi whispered a few words in his ear about supper. The emperor asked Madame Moriconi if she

## Emperor Alexander I.

supped, and upon her answer in the affirmative he said, "I never sup, but I will conform to the usages of the house." In chatting with Madame Moriconi he wanted to know if she passed the winters in town or in the country. She answered that formerly she went to Vilna, but that present circumstances forced every one to curtail expenses. "Yes," replied the emperor, "and the consequences are still more to be feared!" a remark which made us think! "That is what makes me envy the good fortune of my family, who live in the depths of White Russia," said Madame Moriconi. "Without doubt, *that is farther from the frontiers*, but I hope still all will be arranged," said his Majesty.

"God grant it," said the countess.

Supper was served, and the emperor gave his arm to the mistress of the house to go to the dining-room, which, as well as the table, was ornamented with flowers. He refused to take the place of honor which had been prepared for him, changing the whole arrangement of the table with charming vivacity. "I beg you," he said, "let me be only a man, then I shall be so happy." "That is a recreation for your Majesty," said Madame Moriconi the elder. He sat between these two ladies and busied himself in serving them. Taking a glass of Hungarian wine, he drank the health of his hostess, saying, "Is this not called in Polish *Stare wino* (old wine)?"

He said he and his three companions were doing justice to the supper. Pointing to Wolkonski, "See what an appetite; one would n't think he had dined, to see him eat," he said. Prince Wolkonski said to me, with a little temper, "And what a dinner! —

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an egg and half a chicken." "Yes," added Count Tolstoi, "the emperor will never have either cooks or provisions in travelling. He is satisfied to eat what he finds;" and then addressing Alexander he asked, "Well, sire, are you sorry to stay here, instead of going in to our bad quarters at Vilkomir?" "No, indeed," answered the emperor; "it is a long time since I passed such a delightful evening."

Some one spoke of the remarkable memory of the emperor, who recalled with accuracy all the names of persons and places which he had seen in his different journeys in Lithuania; his Majesty said: "I must have memory for the marshal and for myself, for he has none at all. When he speaks to me he always says, 'Sire, you know, it is Mr. So-and-so,' and then tells me the story." The marshal agreed that it was true. I put him to the proof and asked him about the last journey. "I do not remember," he said, "but I will ask the emperor," which he did.

After supper Alexander approached me and asked if the marshal was going to be my physician also, having chatted with me so long at table. In fact, I had remarked that the emperor had observed us with one of those little lorgnettes which he always kept in the sleeve of his uniform, and so often lost.

I answered that it was I, on the contrary, who had taxed the patience and especially the memory of the marshal. "On what subject?" "Oh, on his travels, and unfortunately I have always found him in fault." "Oh! it would be a miracle if any one should succeed in making the marshal remember anything," said the emperor.

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At the moment of retiring, the emperor took Madame Moriconi aside and said he had a favor to ask of her. We were very curious to know what it was. Alexander asked that no one would disturb himself or herself to be present at his departure in the morning. Madame Moriconi insisted, but the emperor retired bowing. We then asked Count Tolstoi and Prince Wolkonski if we might not disobey. They answered that they could not take it upon themselves to authorize us to do so, but that they would go and negotiate a permission from the emperor. His Majesty reappeared, assuring her that he would have it on his conscience if he allowed Madame Moriconi, with her cold, to get up so early. She insisted that it would disturb her still more not to do her duty, and I added that we had decided to run the risk of disobedience. Mademoiselle Dorothee Moriconi said in her turn that we would be up before the regiments at Vilkomir. We all spoke together. The emperor looked from one to another, smiled, made amiable motions of impatience, left us, and returned again. The little scene seemed to amuse him, and there was a charm and liveliness in all his movements. Finally, after having kissed the hand of each of us, he retired to his apartment.

The next morning at six o'clock we were all assembled in the drawing-room, our eyes fixed upon the door by which his Majesty should enter. We had not long to wait till the emperor appeared. He advanced with much grace and dignity toward the mistress of the mansion. "Madame," he said, "I come to reproach you; you have not received me as a

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friend, as an old acquaintance; you have put yourself out for me; you have given up your rooms. I would never have allowed it if I had known. In fact, you have received me too well." He then asked when we had gotten up. "About two hours ago," somebody said. He shook his head. Madame Moriconi said to his Majesty that the impressions of the evening had banished sleep.

At the moment of departure the emperor said more pleasant things to Madame Moriconi, begged her to remember him, and asked if she had no commissions for Vilna. He would not have us conduct him to his carriage, but as soon as he had gone out, we all followed him to the steps, when he laughingly hid himself behind a pillar to put on his overcoat. The emperor sprang from the ground into his calash, and was obliged himself to arrange a quantity of packages which prevented him from sitting down; he did this good-humoredly while waiting for the grand-marshal, who finally arrived, having, not without trouble, gotten into the sleeves of his overcoat, whose torn lining would not let his hands pass through. This incident made us laugh after the departure of his Majesty.

Alexander left a thousand rubles for the servants in the house. Knowing that the priest of the parish had awaited the emperor on his passage, we went into the village to speak to him. This good old man came to meet us, and related with much feeling that the emperor, having seen him coming from the church clothed in his priestly robes and carrying the crucifix, had stopped his horses and springing to the ground advanced toward him to take the cross,

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which he kissed. When the curate wished to kiss his hand he drew it back, and kissed the hand of the priest with great respect, and departed overwhelmed with blessings. This simple, touching mark of respect for age and religion brought tears to my eyes when I heard it.

Perhaps it will be thought that the pleasure of recording these memories which are dear to me has drawn me into too long and too minute details. However, to make known these persons who have played an important rôle in the world's theatre and have left a name honored among men, it is not sufficient to recall the great actions which have made them illustrious; it is necessary, so to speak, to follow them step by step in their private life. It is there that the man is found. Why does one find such a great charm in the historical romances of Walter Scott, who often conducts us with admirable art from room to room, from boudoir to boudoir, even to the bed-chamber of the hero or heroine? It is because he carries us in fancy into the presence of the people whose actions he relates, and the illusion is such that we seem to see and to speak with them. Why is the reading of *mémoires* so universally enjoyed and sought? It is because it admits of a thousand details of circumstance, which the severe tone of history must reject.

The Emperor Alexander, at the time of which I speak, was thirty-five years old, but he looked much younger. I remember asking Count Tolstoi how the health of the emperor could stand these long journeys. "Look at him," said the count, "and you will cease to wonder."



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Notwithstanding the regularity and delicacy of his features, the brightness and freshness of his complexion, his beauty was less striking, at first sight, than that air of benevolence and kindness which captivated all hearts and instantly inspired confidence. His tall, noble, and majestic form, which often stooped a little with grace, like the pose of an antique statue, already threatened to become stout, but he was perfectly formed. His eyes were blue, bright and expressive; he was a little short-sighted. His nose was straight and well shaped, his mouth small and agreeable. The rounded contour of his face, as well as his profile, resembled that of his august mother. His forehead was somewhat bald, but this gave to his whole countenance an open and serene expression, and his hair, of a golden blond, carefully arranged as in the heads on antique cameos or medallions, seemed made to receive the triple crown of laurel, myrtle, and olive. He had an infinity of shades of tone and manner. When he addressed men of distinguished rank, it was with dignity and affability at the same time; to persons of his retinue, with an air of kindness almost familiar; to women of a certain age, with deference; and to young people, with an infinite grace, a refined and attractive manner, and a countenance full of expression.

This prince in his early youth had had his hearing seriously impaired by the report of a discharge of artillery, in consequence of which his left ear was somewhat deaf, and he usually turned the right toward the speaker to hear better. No painter, without exception has ever been able to catch the likeness of his features, especially the expression and refine-



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ment of his countenance ; moreover, Alexander never liked to be painted, and his portraits have generally been made stealthily.

More fortunate than his brother artists, Gérard obtained several sittings of the Emperor Alexander. In his portrait of that prince, as in all his *chefs-d'œuvre*, he has shown great talent and a beautiful touch, but still it is not Alexander. Gérard would give to this pacificator of Europe, to the prince who had come to restore, not to conquer the French monarchy, a conquering air, a martial bearing, which did not suit his features. Gérard has succeeded in making only a beautiful picture. Sculpture this time, as well as many others, has succeeded better than her sister, painting, and we have seen a bust of Alexander, executed by an artist of Berlin, which leaves nothing to be desired. Thorwaldsen has also made a bust of the prince, which, it is said, is worthy of the chisel of that celebrated artist.

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## CHAPTER V

IT was only a short time after the return of the Emperor Alexander to Vilna, that Count Narbonne arrived there, sent by Napoleon, it seemed, less to avoid a rupture and to conciliate than to throw a furtive glance over the Russian army, its strength, its plans, etc.

A man of fashion and of pleasure! With a brilliant and agreeable but changeable mind; ashamed of the many different parts which he had performed, and of the rôle which he even yet played; absolutely wanting in that balance and that justice of aim which are never found in a false position, Count Narbonne was poorly fitted to fill a diplomatic mission.

He had commenced his career in his youth by being knight of honor to the royal princesses of France, who overwhelmed him with kindness, and more than once came to his help; for he was without fortune and had a decided weakness for dissipation. Narbonne showed little gratitude toward these princesses at the time of the Revolution. Led away by Madame de Staël and others, he adopted revolutionary ideas. As minister to Louis XVI. he took measures against the foreign troops who came to Louis's aid. Suspected by the revolutionary party and despised at the same time by the royalists, he quitted France during the Reign of Terror. After having been a wanderer a number of years, he re-

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turned to France at the moment when Napoleon took the reins of government.

Count Narbonne, after many attempts and solicitations, obtained of Napoleon, first, the place of minister to Munich, afterwards that of adjutant-general. Napoleon had let his choice fall upon Narbonne on this occasion because he was the only one, perhaps, in that military court who had preserved the old manners, and a manner of expressing himself which rendered him worthy of being heard by a sovereign so refined and polite as Alexander. However, in spite of the elegant facility of his language, Narbonne could adduce no argument in favor of his new master, in the audience which the Emperor Alexander accorded to him. That prince explained with so much clearness and noble eloquence the moderation of his conduct, his just causes of complaint, and the impossibility of conciliating the propositions made to him with the honor of his crown, the interests of the empire, and his desire to avoid the shedding of human blood, that Narbonne, dazzled and confounded, could find no answer to this speech. In passing out from his audience he said to one of his acquaintances: "The emperor was so secure on his own ground, his reasoning had so much force and logic, that I could only intrench myself behind a few trite court phrases."

Narbonne was present the same day at a grand review, and dined with the emperor, who sent him a valuable present of diamonds and a snuff-box ornamented with his portrait.

This envoy wishing to communicate with the Poles, to whom he had letters, wanted to prolong his stay;

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but the day after his audience the emperor sent him by one of his stewards the provisions for a most luxurious journey, and immediately after, Count Cotchubey and Count Nesselrode came to make him a farewell visit, after which Narbonne felt that he could no longer defer his departure; especially when a courier came to announce that the horses were ordered for six o'clock in the evening. The profound admiration of Narbonne for Alexander, and the astonishment which the bearing and strength of the Russian army caused him were the only results of this mission.

I had not been long at Towiany before I learned that his Imperial Majesty had deigned to name as ladies of honor at the court, Mademoiselle Dorothee Moriconi, Mademoiselle Marie Grabowska, and myself; also two other young persons who were then at Vilna: Mademoiselle Giedroyc, who was afterwards lady in waiting to the Empress Josephine, and Mademoiselle Wilehouska. The emperor himself sent the packet to Towiany which contained the three orders in diamonds with the united crests of the dowager empress and the Empress Elizabeth, charging my father, in the most amiable manner, to pay for him the debt which he said he had contracted at Towiany.

My father came to take me back to Vilna. The next day after my arrival I went to the chapel of the emperor. It was Sunday and the assembly there was numerous and brilliant. It was the first time that I had been present at a grand service of the Greek ritual. I found that the dress of the archbishops, the wide violet robes, the long, float-

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ing hair and anointed beard covering the breast, the incense which perfumed the air, the golden doors which opened and closed at marked intervals,—all had a kind of harmony with the majesty of the Christian religion. The chant especially, without any instrumental accompaniment, seemed to me to have a celestial beauty and simplicity. It was executed by the singers of his Majesty's chapel at St. Petersburg.

The same day, my father dining at court, the grand-marshal came to say: "Does your daughter go out this evening? For his Majesty proposes to go and see her, and has written to the empress that he will make a visit to one of the maids of honor; and it may be," added Tolstoi, smiling, "that the emperor has counted without his host."

My father wrote me a note in pencil to inform me of the proposed visit, and sent it by a court messenger. The emperor arrived in the evening in a *dorochka*. My father received him at the foot of the staircase, while I awaited him at the door of the antechamber, where I expressed in a few words how happy I was that his Majesty deigned to come himself to receive my most respectful thanks. The emperor said that I owed him none; that on the contrary it was for him to thank me for all those *marks of courtesy* which I had shown him at Towiany; finally, that he had come to present me his *most humble respects*.

I only quote these words to give an idea of the chivalrous tone of this prince. Entering the drawing-room he insisted that I should sit on the sofa, while he took a chair, and put his hat on the floor.

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As my father remained standing in spite of the invitation of his Majesty to sit, the emperor rose suddenly, saying, "Well, Count, if you do not take a seat, I will remain standing also." My father was forced to obey.

The emperor spoke of Towiany, and said, smiling, to my father that I had *accused* him of taking me for a *countrywoman*. Then with a tone of entreaty while it remained only with him to command, he asked me if I would not come to St. Petersburg. As I lowered my eyes without responding to this proposition, by which I felt a little agitated, "That is, then, impossible?" said he, with an air of gentleness quite charming. "Sire," I replied at last, "I will take it as a holiday some day." "In fact," continued the emperor, "it is not the time to go to St. Petersburg; but I hope you will come there later, and we will do the best we can to procure you all sorts of amusements." His Majesty praised the environs of Vilna very much, and as I spoke of the beautiful country houses which surround St. Petersburg, and the beauty of the Neva, "Oh, yes," said the emperor, "art has done all she could to conquer nature; for St. Petersburg is situated in the midst of an uncultivated morass. We will show you all that when you come. Our climate is horrible!" added he. "When we have fifteen fine days in a season we say that the summer has been superb." The emperor said he had just bought Zakret, the estate of General Bennigsen, half a league from Vilna, and that he was now a citizen of the town and had the right to wear its uniform. I expressed my regret that his Majesty had not given preference to Werki, the ancient and beautiful residence of the

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Bishop of Vilna, Prince Massalski,<sup>1</sup> whose vast castle built in the Italian style of the better period, is situated upon a wooded mountain and commands an extensive view over the country about, including Vilna which is a mile distant, and the Vilia which flows at the foot of the mountain. The emperor replied that that would have been a fancy too expensive for him, and added by way of a jest, that my father ought to make that acquisition. The Count objected that he was father of a family. "So much more the reason," replied his Majesty; "you could give it to your daughter, who would do the honors of the castle, and that would be charming."

The conversation soon took a graver turn, and politics became the subject of it. Without touching upon actual circumstances, the emperor assured us that he had only pacific intentions; that he had made every sacrifice to maintain peace; that he was resolved in any case not to commence hostilities; and, finally, that he had only the good of his subjects at heart, and that the calamities of the times made him suffer intensely.

My father said that the Lithuanians regretted that these unfortunate circumstances did not allow them to show all their zeal for his Majesty, and that they all knew that the emperor wished to be the father of his subjects. The emperor answered that he would

<sup>1</sup> Prince Ignace Massalski (born 1729, died about 1800) was descended from a long line of Russian princes. They were one of the most influential families in Lithuania when the two rival houses of Radzivil and Massalski contended for supremacy. He supported Stanislaus for the Polish throne. In 1762 he was consecrated Bishop of Vilna. His contemporaries describe him as a learned scholar, erudite and gifted with a quick and lively intelligence.

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endeavor to meet the confidence which they placed in him. In quitting us, Alexander, with his amiably extravagant politeness, asked my pardon for having wearied me with politics and for having abused my patience.

My friends from Towiany had also come to Vilna to thank the emperor, who paid them a visit at which I was present. I remember a remark of the emperor's which made a great sensation among the Poles of his retinue to whom I related it, and who were pleased to give it a different interpretation, perhaps, from the sense which the emperor had meant. Tea was brought in. The emperor took the glass jug which held the cream and served the ladies. When my turn came he asked if I took much. "Sire, *à l'anglaise*," I replied. "*Il vaut mieux être Polonaise*," said he, with that quick wit which was natural to him.

They were busy then at Vilna with preparations for an entertainment which was given at Zakret, the house of the emperor. A storm was ready to break over our heads, and yet, in full security, no one thought of anything but pleasure and of the happiness of having the emperor there. Not only were we far from foreseeing his departure, and from suspecting that the troops of Napoleon were near the Niemen, but we were even ignorant of the fact that the French had crossed Germany. No kind of news was allowed to arrive or be made known in Lithuania. Never were political plans enveloped in so impenetrable a veil!

A long, open gallery supported by pillars was built in the garden of Zakret, designed for a dancing-hall.



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It was to enclose in its centre a field of flowers. An architect of the government, Professor Schultz, had charge of the work.

My father, happening to be at Zakret, called the attention of the architect to the fact that the foundations were not deep enough, in proportion to the height of the gallery and the thickness of the columns. Schultz acknowledged that the remark was perfectly correct, but said he would remedy that difficulty by joining the top of the colonnade with the framework of the roof. The next day the whole gallery fell with a terrible crash. Fortunately it was the workmen's dinner-hour. One, however, was found crushed under the ruins.

At this misfortune, losing his presence of mind and perhaps fearing that he might be suspected of having a secret understanding with the French, too little confident in the indulgence of the emperor, the unhappy Schultz fled. He was pursued, but nothing was found of him but his hat on the bank of the river. The poor unfortunate had drowned himself. Think what a horrible catastrophe would have been the result of that event, if it had happened two days later! The emperor, all his military household, the commanding-generals of the army, a crowd of persons of distinction would certainly have perished in this frightful disaster. It would have been for the French a campaign gained without drawing the sword.

The entertainment at Zakret took place, nevertheless. I never saw one so beautiful, and never was there a farewell so merry; for except those who were in the secret, no one could yet foresee that this ball

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was to be the signal for the departure of the emperor and the retreat of the Russians.

We assembled at eight o'clock in the park of Zakret. The evening was beautiful, the sky a little clouded, as if to shelter us from the heat of the sun. The ladies, in elegant toilets and covered with flowers, were seated in a circle on a square of carpets spread upon the grass where the gallery was to have been, the whole palace ornamented with orange-trees in full bloom which perfumed the air.

A crowd of people, whom curiosity and especially the desire to see the emperor had attracted from the town, formed groups in the distance. The musicians of the Imperial Guard played choice bits of music in different parts of the grounds. The sight of this brilliant assembly of beautifully dressed women and the military in splendid uniforms with their diamond decorations; this company scattered over the green lawn, the old trees forming masses of verdure; the Vilia, which reflected in its winding course the blue heavens and the colors of the setting sun; the mountains, whose tops disappeared in the soft clouds, — all offered a scene of enchantment; but when the emperor appeared, no one saw anything but him.

His Majesty wore on that day the uniform of the Semenowfski Guards with light blue facings, which became him well. Having made the tour of the circle of ladies, whom he obliged to remain seated in his presence, even while he spoke to them, the emperor chatted with several of the men of the company. The ladies were invited to take refreshments, and then it was proposed to the emperor that he should open the ball on the square of carpets,

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that the assembled crowd might enjoy the spectacle. He consented with his accustomed good-nature, and engaged for the *Polonaise* Madame Bennigsen, who did the honors of the ball. Then he danced with Madame Barclay de Tolly, and afterwards with me; then we ascended to the dancing-hall which was spacious and brilliantly lighted.

I will not repeat all the flattering things which his Majesty said to me on this occasion, as well as to all the other ladies who were present. It would take too long to relate them all, for the emperor's talent for gallantry, if it may be so called, was inexhaustible. I think no one ever possessed, like this prince, the art of giving a graceful turn to the most indifferent expressions, and the rare gift of saying appropriate things, which may be attributed not only to quickness of wit, but to a rare goodness and kindness of heart. Wishing to know whether I intended to return to Towiany or remain with my father, he said, "If I were the count, I would not let you leave me!"

His Majesty retired during the supper, which was served without formality at little tables in the open air. The weather was so mild and still that the lights did not go out, and the brilliant illumination of a part of the park, the cascades, the river, and the islands, vied with the moon and stars to make it a scene of enchantment.

Who would have thought, in seeing the grace and brilliancy which Alexander displayed on that evening, that it was during the ball that he received the news that the French had crossed the Niemen, and that their advanced guards were not more than ten miles from Vilna? Six months later I heard Alexander

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say that he had suffered intensely in being obliged to show a gaiety which he was far from feeling.

Three days after the entertainment at Zakret, the emperor left Vilna to go into his headquarters at Sventsiani. Hoping that the stay of his Majesty would be prolonged, and not foreseeing the events which awaited us, my father had prepared to give a *fête* for Alexander.

It was at the moment of his departure that the monarch made that beautiful proclamation which excited universal enthusiasm in the Russian army, delighted that their sovereign consented to command his own soldiers. "*I shall be with you,*" he said, "*and God will be against the aggressor!*" These words were an inspiration. What a difference between the noble and religious tone of the proclamations of Alexander, who always placed his confidence in the justice of his cause, and above all, in the protection of Heaven, and the tone of domination which pervaded the proclamations of Napoleon, who seemed to recognize no divinity except that to which he had chained his chariot, the goddess Fortune!

Not only did the Russian troops evacuate Vilna, but also the few Russians who had lived there for a number of years hastened to depart, with their wives and children and all that they possessed. All the horses in the town were put in requisition in this urgent necessity, except those of my father, who, moreover, had not taken the precaution to hide them, as did several persons, who put their horses in their granaries, where the police did not think to go in search of them.

There was the interval of only two days between

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the departure of Alexander and the entry of the French, but the disturbance and anxiety made them seem of mortal length. Whenever the sound of a horse was heard in the streets, some one ran to tell some alarming news, which was almost always false. Some said the French would fire upon the town, and advised me to flee into the mountains, as the cannon-balls would make the church-towers fall on our house; others came running with pale and frightened faces to announce that the Russians in retiring had set fire to the town; others, finally, asserted that they had seen the Emperor Alexander running through the streets, without uniform, trying to reassure the inhabitants and promising not to abandon them. The governor-general, Korsakoff, as he was departing, assured my father that there was nothing to be feared. The astonishment and perplexity which the expectation of such great events inspired left no place in my mind for vain terrors, which, moreover, are no help against danger, and only weaken the courage so necessary in all the circumstances of life.

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## CHAPTER VI

THE night of June 15 and 16, new style, the Russian troops went off in good order and in a silence most imposing. It was not a flight, although it has been called so. At eight o'clock in the morning a detachment of French cavalry dashed into the town, galloping to the defence of the bridge, to which the Russians had set fire. Nothing can express the emotion I felt on seeing Poles! — the Poles, who rode with loose rein and sabres bare, waving the flags of their lances and bearing my country's colors, which I now saw for the first time.

I was at an open window, and they saluted me as they passed. At the sight of these compatriots, my heart was moved, and I felt that I too was born a Pole, and was to become one again. Tears of joy and enthusiasm poured down my cheeks. It was a delightful moment, but it did not last long!

The intoxication of joy was universal. The town resounded with cries of triumph. All rushed to arms. The Russians had thrown a great many in the river Vilia; men of all ranks, even from the dregs of the people, hastened to get them out. Ridiculously armed, they ran through the streets in their working-clothes, and assembled in front of the town hall, throwing their hats in the air with noisy exclamations of patriotism. My father, being wiser and more prudent, was alarmed at these popular demonstrations. "Fools! madmen!" he cried; "the Russians are

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only a few steps distant; who can foresee in which direction they will march, and what will be the result of events?" I remember that three days after the entrance of the French, seeing the disorder which accompanied the march of that formidable army, the insubordination of the troops, the improvidence of the commanders, their fatalistic confidence in what they called "*the destiny of the emperor*" (for it was always by this grand expression that the French officers and the admirers of Napoleon answered all objections which were made them on this campaign), my father formed unfavorable expectations as to the issue of the war.

Six hundred thousand men of all European nations subject to the Napoleonic policy marched in two lines, without magazines and without provisions, through a country impoverished by the continental system, and recently ruined by heavy requisitions. A Russian general had even presented to the Emperor Alexander the plan of totally devastating Lithuania, removing its inhabitants, and leaving nothing but a vast wilderness to the arms of Napoleon. But the feelings of Alexander would not allow him to make use of that measure, which if successful would be violent and inhumane. They contented themselves by burning all the storehouses of grain and the mills.

The French army, as they entered Vilna, had not had bread for three days. All the bakers in the town were immediately employed in the service of the troops; and in spite of the saying of General Jomini,<sup>1</sup> "One never dies of famine in a besieged

<sup>1</sup> Henri, Baron Jomini (born 1779, died 1869) was an able general and writer on strategy. At an early age he entered the French army and became an aide-de-camp to Ney. He presented to Napoleon on



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city," want was cruelly felt by the inhabitants of Vilna, especially by those who had not taken the precaution, or had not the means of laying in a supply of provisions in advance. The country through which the grand army had passed had been ravaged and pillaged, and its corn had been cut green for the cavalry; it could not, therefore, supply the needs of the capital, and the people dared not even expose their convoys on the roads, which were infested by marauders.

Besides, the disorderly behavior of the army was a consequence of the sentiments of its chief, for after having crossed the Niemen, Napoleon, in an order of the day, declared to his troops that they were about to set foot on Russian territory. It was thus that the liberator of Poland, so much desired, announced himself to the Lithuanians. In consequence of this proclamation Lithuania was considered and treated as a hostile country, while its inhabitants, animated by

the field of Austerlitz his "Treatise on the Grand Operations of War;" a few days after this event he was appointed Chief of the Staff of Ney. For his conduct at Jena (1806) he received the title of Baron, and two years later was employed in Spain. In 1811 he became a general of brigade, and the following year was appointed French Governor of Vilna, and later of Smolensk. He rendered valuable service to the French army during the latter part of their disastrous retreat from Moscow. He contributed greatly to the victory of Bautzen. His promotion having been obstructed by the enmity of Berthier, he quitted the French service in 1812, and entered that of Russia, with the rank of lieutenant-general, and became aide-de-camp to Alexander. In 1815 he accompanied the czar to Paris and received the order of St. Louis from Louis XVIII. He was intrusted with the completion of the military education of Nicholas, who, on his accession to the throne retained him as aide-de-camp. He organized the Russian military academy. In addition to the above-mentioned work he was the author of a number of important treatises on strategy, several of which have been translated into the English language.



## Emperor Alexander I.

patriotic enthusiasm, flew to welcome the French. They were soon to be despoiled and outraged by those whom they regarded as the instrument of the deliverance of their country, and compelled to abandon their homes and their property to pillage. Many took refuge in the depths of the forests, carrying with them that which they held the most dear,—the honor of their wives and daughters.

Each day brought the recital of new excesses committed by the French soldiers in the country. Vilna seemed to have become the seat of war. Soldiers bivouacked in the streets, which resounded with the clash of arms, the blare of trumpets, the neighing of horses, and the confusion of many languages.

When, wearied with these sights, which presented themselves constantly to my view, I raised my eyes to the heavens to rest them on a more tranquil scene, I seemed to see, even in the clouds, armies in motion, and my imagination recalled with a sort of terror the visions of the Apocalypse.

In the mean time French arrogance, astonished at the discouragement which had taken possession of all minds, expected always all obstacles to be removed, all difficulties to disappear. They demanded soldiers, bread, and money of Lithuania. They organized in haste a temporary government; they reawakened the national pride with sharp words. "There is no patriotism among you," said the French, "no energy, no vigor;" and the Lithuanians replied, to revive their drooping courage, "We shall be ruined, but we will still be Poles!" And what could be more certain, since the French Mahomet did not deign to guarantee their hopes and sacrifices?

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Napoleon entered Vilna anxious and discontented. The easiness of this victory dismayed him; he had too much judgment not to see that the retreat of the Russians was not inspired by the fear of his name, but covered deep designs. "I had believed that the taking of Vilna would cost me twenty thousand men at least," he said.

Napoleon was furious when he learned that Russia had made peace with Turkey, and that he could no longer hope for a favorable diversion either toward the north or toward the south. The scarcity of food, the disorder of the army, the mistakes made by Prince Jérôme, the continual losses among the cavalry, all combined to make him look the sad result of this campaign in the face as a thing inevitable. But the fatal *genius* of Napoleon pushed him forward, and it was thus that, from illusion to illusion, he rushed to his ruin, rejecting the truth as an apparition whose presence he could not endure.

At a general audience in the imperial castle, Napoleon declared in vague and obscure phrases that he was come to restore Poland, that a diet was assembled at Warsaw for the election of a king; but that this diet was still ignorant who should be king. Count Narbonne, who was then at Vilna in Napoleon's retinue, said to some one who asked him who was destined for the throne of Poland that the emperor, having a mania for crowns, would probably take that of Poland also. I remember that one day, in a large company, some of the French amused themselves by having the ladies make the election. One of them did not fail to let her choice fall on Napoleon himself; others elected his brother Jérôme, the King of Naples,

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and even Marshal Davoust.<sup>1</sup> I was silent. "And you, mademoiselle," said some one to me; "whom do you choose?" "I have not the honor to know all these gentlemen," answered I, in a negligent and absent-minded manner. The ladies seemed to be struck by the stupidity of my reply, but I think that he who asked me that question was not altogether of their opinion on that point. On another occasion a very stupid remark escaped me. I had just received news from the country, where my brother was. He had sent me provisions and flowers, and at the same time the news that the army had not passed that way. Delighted with this good news, and forgetting the presence of a Frenchman attached to the diplomatic mission of the minister of the interior, I said to my companion, who also was French, "Ah, Mademoiselle T., how fortunate they are at R. They have not seen one Frenchman!" The gentleman could not help

<sup>1</sup> Louis Nicholas Davoust (born 1770, died 1823). At the age of fifteen he was appointed second lieutenant of cavalry. He served brilliantly in the Armies of the Rhine under Moreau, and distinguished himself greatly at Aboukir. In 1800 he was appointed general of division, and the next year Commander of the Consular Guard, and in 1804 Marshal of the Empire. He took a distinguished part in the victories of Ulm and Austerlitz. For a great victory he won over the Prussians at Auerstädt (1806), he was rewarded with the title of Duke of Auerstädt, and in 1809 he was made Prince of Echmuhl for his part in a battle of that name. After Wagram he was appointed military commander in Poland, where his tyrannical cruelty made him detested by Poles and Germans alike. Having served through the Russian campaign and been wounded at Borodino, he established himself at Hamburg, whence the Allies in vain tried to dislodge him. On Napoleon's escape from Elba he was appointed Minister of War, and in three months he had the army organized on its former basis. After Waterloo he took command of the army at Paris, and would have offered battle to the Allies had not the Provisional Government ordered him to come to terms.

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saying, "Oh! how you do love us here!" A little confused at my exclamation, and hoping to repair it, I said, "It is not the French, it is the army." "Yes, yes, I understand perfectly; they are plunderers."

In the midst of all these evils which weighed upon our unhappy country, without speaking of those which menaced it, one ray of hope, one glimmer of peace, came to shine upon us. It was from that angel whom we almost regretted to have known, because we believed we should never see him again, — Alexander, who, wishing to try one more last and generous effort to spare humanity a bloody struggle, had sent General Balacheff to offer propositions of peace most advantageous to France and to Poland.

Napoleon commenced by saying that after the declaration of war he would consider each diplomatic agent as a spy. He consented, however, to accord a private audience to Balacheff, received him politely, and expressed his astonishment that the Emperor Alexander took the trouble to command his armies in person. "That is well enough for an old corporal like me," he said.

He rejected all ideas of pacification, letting it be understood that the Rubicon was crossed, and that fortune alone should decide the result of the war. As he was about to dismiss the Russian envoy, Napoleon asked him which was the best way to Moscow. "There are several roads which lead thither," replied Balacheff, with remarkable presence of mind, "and you can even go by way of *Pultawa*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pultawa (Poltava), a city in southern Russia where, June 27, 1709, Peter the Great gained a decisive victory over Charles XII., totally destroying his army and causing him to seek an asylum in Turkey.

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An old French emigrant of a name very well known, who had made several journeys to France since Napoleon had come into power, and who had never been presented to him, was at Vilna at the time of the invasion of the French. Indebted for his life and that of his family to the sovereign of Russia, who had received him in his troubles with the most noble generosity, this Frenchman felt a just repugnance at the idea of rendering any homage whatever to the dominator of Europe, the enemy of Alexander. However, forewarned by an old friend of his family attached to Napoleon, that he would be called upon in an imperious manner to submit to a species of examination from the mouth of Napoleon himself, the emigrant decided to present himself.

At the hour appointed for the audience, he was introduced by the lackey, who called his name with a loud voice in the room where, a few days before, the Emperor Alexander had received. Napoleon received the emigrant with a kind smile, said that he had heard of his last visit to Paris, and commenced walking up and down the room with him while he put the following questions: —

“Have you seen the Emperor Alexander here?”

“I have had the honor to present myself to him.”

“Does he really govern?”

“He does a great deal of work with his ministers; all the important details of the government are placed under his eyes.”

“That is not what I ask. Has he really all the power in his hands? Is he not influenced or controlled by the senate?”

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“The senate in Russia is scarcely more than the highest judiciary body, a tribunal of final appeal. I do not know that it has any means, or even any wish, to struggle against sovereign authority.”

“Why did the Russians retire so suddenly, and why have they not been willing, here or in the environs, to test their arms? They had a position near Vilna, which would have cost me twenty thousand men.”

“The rapid march of the French army, guided by such able generals, has no doubt surprised the Russian army, who have not believed it to be their duty to show resistance.”

“Ah! you are entirely mistaken; our march has not been rapid. I have been made to lose much time. I have commenced this war with regret, and it will cause a great loss of blood. The Emperor Alexander has driven me to it by not observing the conditions of the Treaty of Tilsit. The prince had his mind badly directed in his early youth. He received false ideas of philanthropy from his tutor, one called La Harpe. Will you believe me that in our conversations at Erfurt I found myself obliged to oppose the opinion he had that an elective government was more favorable to the happiness of a people than hereditary power? To govern men, it is necessary to be a god. Hereditary chance serves men better than their own choice could do.”

Such language in the mouth of such a man was indeed surprising, if it is possible that he was at the same time sincere. He continued in the same strain: “The Emperor Alexander does not like etiquette; he is almost always without a retinue. My brother-

## Emperor Alexander I.

in-law, the Emperor of Austria has the same manners, and he has often manifested his astonishment to see me surrounded by a numerous court. I have told him that the French need to be impressed, even by the externals of power, and that, besides, my position is different."

In speaking of the Lithuanian nobility, he used a coarse expression which I will not repeat here; and in general he did not think much of the Poles, who were sacrificing their fortunes and their lives to him. He wrote from Moscow to the Duke of Bassano<sup>1</sup> that the women alone in Poland had any spirit or character. In the instructions which he gave to an archbishop, M. de Pradt,<sup>2</sup> he recommended him, above all things, *to look after the women* of Poland, because they were all there was in that country.

<sup>1</sup> Hugues Bernard Maret, Duke of Bassano (born 1763, died 1839). An able French statesman and diplomatist. He studied law in Paris and under the new regime he was rapidly advanced in the department of Foreign Affairs. In 1793 he was sent on missions to England and Naples. From 1800 to 1811, as Secretary of State, he directed the Home Department with great credit, and had a large share of Bonaparte's confidence, whom he accompanied on his campaigns. In 1811 he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and received the title of Duke of Bassano. He was in Napoleon's suite during the Russian campaign, and was employed by him in various diplomatic missions. The Duke married his cousin, Mademoiselle Lejeas, a daughter of the mayor of Dijon, who was distinguished at the imperial court for her beauty and wit.

<sup>2</sup> Abbé Dominique Dufour de Pradt (born 1759, died 1837) a French diplomatist and political writer. In 1804 he became the almoner of Napoleon, and the following year Bishop of Poitiers, and 1808 Archbishop of Malines. In 1812 Napoleon sent him as ambassador to Warsaw, hoping that he might stir up the patriotic zeal of the Poles and turn it to his account.



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## CHAPTER VII

NAPOLEON, during his stay at Vilna, exacted a presentation of the ladies at the castle. Suffering mentally as well as physically, I thought I could excuse myself from going, but my father objected on account of the position in which he found himself. Some evil-minded persons had represented him as a partisan of the Russians, and without the King of Naples he would not even have been put on the list of citizens which was placed under the eyes of Napoleon. Seeing that I could not avoid the presentation, I declared my intention of showing myself with my *order*.<sup>1</sup>

My father hesitated at first, and said he must find out if Mademoiselle G., the only one of my associates then at Vilna, would wear hers also. I begged him to do nothing of the kind. I dressed myself then in haste, and in a very bad humor; for they had wakened me at five o'clock in the morning, to invite me, by order of the police, to present myself at court before noon. These military manners displeased me to the last degree, especially in comparison with the graciousness and exquisite politeness of Alexander and his court. Never had I put on my decoration with so much pleasure, and, to speak the truth, with so much pride.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will remember the decoration in diamonds which the author had received from the court of Russia.



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I having joined several ladies of my acquaintance, to go with them to the castle, they did all in their power during the drive to persuade me to take off my decoration, and thought they would frighten me by saying that Napoleon was a terrible man, and that he would certainly say something disagreeable to me. As I expressed somewhat freely my way of thinking, "In the name of Heaven, hush!" they said; "do you not know that the walls have ears and will repeat to him all you have said about him?"

Nothing could make me change my resolution. I answered that perhaps I should see myself forced to conform to the will of him to whom all yielded, but, as long as that will was unknown to me, I would act as I was now doing. In fact, there would have been as much cowardice as ingratitude on my part in rejecting thus, in the presence of his fortunate and triumphant adversary, the proofs of the kindness of a sovereign so worthy to be loved, at the instant even when that sovereign seemed to be persecuted by fate. My heart revolted at that idea. I acknowledge that I expected rudeness on the part of Napoleon, and I prepared myself to answer with firmness; but I had not that satisfaction. He only addressed me, as will be seen, questions to which very insignificant answers could be made. All those which have been attributed to me on that occasion are not exact.

When I was named to Napoleon, his attention was immediately attracted by the diamond coat of arms, and the blue ribbon which I wore.

"What decoration have you there?" he asked.

"The crests of their Majesties the Empresses of Russia," I replied.

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“You are, then, a Russian lady?”

“No, sire, I have not that distinction.”

Later at a ball that was given him, perceiving Mademoiselle G. beside me, Napoleon asked her, being also *a lady of the palace* at the Russian court, why she did not put on her decoration. Mademoiselle G. replied that she had not thought she ought to wear it in the present circumstances. “Why not?” replied Napoleon; “it is a court distinction which signifies nothing; the Emperor Alexander is very amiable to have given it to you. One can be a good Pole, and wear the crest,” added he, turning to me with a pleasant smile.

Napoleon knew how to appreciate a trait of character, even in a woman. When it was seen that the thing had turned out well I was much praised for the firmness which I had shown on that occasion, but I only wished that the Emperor Alexander might be informed of it some day, and I saw little chance of that desire being soon fulfilled.

At the same presentation, Napoleon, after having spoken to several ladies, and, according to his custom, asking singular questions, — “Are you married? How many children have you? Are they big and fat, hey?” — he addressed the whole circle and said: “The Emperor Alexander is exceedingly amiable, he has gained all hearts here; are you good Poles?” A general smile served as response.

Napoleon affected to show in public sentiments of esteem and friendship for the prince whose empire he came to ravage. In the audience which he gave to the corps of the University of Vilna, he commenced by saying to the members of the academy, “You

## Emperor Alexander I.

are all papists, hey?" I forget what the answer was. Then he continued: "The Emperor Alexander is a good prince, a philosopher on the throne. Does he protect you?" The rector replied that the academy was greatly indebted to the munificence of the Emperor of Russia.

Napoleon had nothing imposing either in his face or manners. I was astonished not to feel in his presence that emotion which one usually cannot prevent at the sight of a celebrated personage. All that glory bought with the price of men and blood could not inspire me with enthusiasm. The glory of conquerors is made to shine in history, but it is goodness alone which conquers the hearts of men. I had often pictured to myself the face of Napoleon with a countenance sparkling with genius. What was my surprise and disappointment on seeing only a little, short, fat, waddling man, with sleek, plastered-down hair, with good enough features but little expression in his face, not even that of hardness which is found in all his portraits, with the exception of that by David! On the contrary, there was something pleasant in his smile, which showed very handsome teeth.

From a distance, I confess, his sallow, white face without a tinge of color, and his antique profile took on a character of severity, which disappeared as soon as it was examined near.

Eight days had passed since the entrance of Napoleon to Vilna. In this trouble and disaster caused by an undisciplined army composed mostly of a collection of foreigners, all making war in spite of themselves, and detesting him who led them (for it would be unjust to attribute to the French alone

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the excesses committed in their name), — in these circumstances people had little heart for pleasures and entertainments. The Duke of Bassano, however, persuaded my cousin, Count P., to give a ball at his house on the day of the Polish confederation.

This entertainment, honored by the presence of Napoleon, was as brilliant as the circumstances and the extreme poverty succeeding such devastation would permit. In the midst of cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* the sounds of military music, the light of allegoric transparencies, brilliant illuminations, and the prodigality of a splendid repast, a man died of hunger in the street! A frightful contrast, but worthy of the presence of the man who was to bury his armies under the snows of Russia!

As soon as the arrival of Napoleon had been announced at the ball, several ladies were chosen to go and receive him at the foot of the stairs, and I was of the number. The marshals of the empire, grand dignitaries, not to mention the grand chamberlains, rushed out of the hall at the name of the emperor, as if an enemy awaited them on the battle-field. The grand equerry, Caulincourt, presented steps to his sovereign, to aid him in descending from the carriage, as if the earth were not worthy to be touched by his imperial foot.

Without deigning to salute the ladies who had come to meet him, and turning his back on them, Napoleon ascended the steps covered with silk stuffs to the cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* cries of which his ear was never weary. Far from taking offence at his impoliteness, I only thought we had been foolish to expose ourselves to it.

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After having chatted with several ladies in the ball-room, Napoleon seated himself on a kind of temporary throne which they had arranged with an arm-chair, a carpet, and a cushion, which latter, he kicked away after trying it. Then in a commanding tone, he cried, "*Let the ladies be seated!*" and the ladies sat down and the ball was opened.

For a few minutes Napoleon looked at the dancers, addressed a few words to the persons who formed his court, to the marshals, and to him who gave the entertainment; then, rising, he made once more the tour of the circle of ladies, and departed accompanied by the usual acclamations, leaving the French ecstatic over the amiability of their sovereign. This was a characteristic to which he certainly made no pretensions, and which it was difficult for him to unite with the titles of grand captain, conqueror, and founder of an empire. Men and women wore that day the national cockade, a patriotic plaything offered to the hopes of the Poles,—hopes never to be realized, since he who had it in his power had never shown the will or the desire to gratify them, and they were entirely dependent on his tortuous policy.

Expressing my astonishment one day that the ambition of Napoleon could not be satisfied with the possession of one of the most beautiful thrones of Europe, and that he was always making war against us, and against every other nation, I was told that it was not alone the thirst for conquest which guided Napoleon, but the necessity of extirpating the Jacobin party in France. The remedy was at least as violent as the evil.

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A few days after the ball I was riding with Madame B., and several other persons, when we met Napoleon, who was returning from Zakret with a brilliant and numerous escort. He stopped to speak to us and asked us if we liked to ride and if we were good *horsemwomen*. A few steps farther, and we came to Zakret, a fortnight before so brilliant in all the splendor of a festival and the presence of the most amiable of sovereigns — it was in ruins! Our horses mounted to the lawn where I had danced with the Emperor Alexander. The orange-trees were overturned and broken; the mansion, furnished not long since with the greatest elegance, was entirely devastated; the fine conservatories filled with exotic plants had been destroyed and pillaged, not only by the soldiers, but by people from the town. A sad silence reigned everywhere in those places where I had heard the sounds of music and the notes of joy and pleasure. The birds alone made their songs heard and had not deserted their groves; the waterfalls were drained; in a word, Zakret had been turned into a military hospital.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER VIII

HAVING given up all hope of peace, strong in his own conscience, and filled with a pious confidence in the help and protection of Providence, Alexander quitted his headquarters at Sventsiani and started for Moscow. The arrival of the emperor at the former capital of the empire, his presence, his speeches, and his proclamations excited universal enthusiasm and a species of fervor and zeal among the patriotic nobility, and the Russian people, so religious and so loyal. As the emperor was dining one day with the Countess Orloff, an immense crowd gathered round the palace and gardens, desirous, eager, to see their adored sovereign. In order to satisfy that desire so natural, the countess had all the gates of the garden opened so as to give free entrance to the people, who, mad with joy and love, swore in the presence of Heaven to consecrate their strength, their lives, and all they possessed to their emperor. This oath was religiously kept, and Moscow in ashes has well attested it.

How the sensitive heart of Alexander must have been touched! These spontaneous impulses on the part of a people, impulses which can neither be counterfeited nor provoked, are grand and sublime. They can exist only among those nations whose hearts are still near to nature and who are deeply impressed with religious ideas; who, accustomed to see in their sovereign the representative of God

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whom they adore, build their hopes of future happiness on the sentiments of obedience and fidelity to which they have consecrated themselves. What a constitution is that which has for its foundation celestial faith and recompense! What could be substituted for it? It would be necessary to commence by changing the primitive character of the Russian nation. I repeat it, one will never encounter the touching spectacle of these scenes of love and affection between a sovereign and his subjects among frivolous and sensual nations, for a long time corrupted by habits of luxury, idleness, effeminacy, egotism, and cupidity.

The Emperor Alexander stopped only a short time at Moscow. Confiding the command of his armies to General Barclay de Tolly,<sup>1</sup> he returned to St. Petersburg. This prudent prince knew how useful his presence and the example of his firmness would be at that capital and at the court in this formidable crisis. Napoleon had quitted Vilna, and used every effort to pursue an enemy who always escaped him by following a plan cleverly conceived and contrived, it is said, by the prince royal of Sweden.

<sup>1</sup> Michael, Prince Barclay de Tolly (born 1755, died 1818) was a celebrated Russian field-marshal of Scotch extraction, who early distinguished himself in the wars against Turkey, Sweden, and Poland. He was made lieutenant-general after the battle of Eylau, and in 1810 was appointed Minister of War. Two years later he obtained the command of the Army of the West, but after the battle of Smolensk he was superseded by Kutusov. At Borodino he commanded the right wing, and by his skilful retreat contributed to save the remnant of the Russian army. He subsequently held the chief command at Bautzen, Culm, and Leipsic, and in 1814 was created field-marshal. A short time before his death he was made a Prince of the Empire.



## Emperor Alexander I.

Knowing well the military genius of Napoleon, which led him to finish his campaigns rapidly by decisive actions, it is stated that Bernadotte counselled the Emperor of Russia not to risk an engagement with the "*great winner of battles*," but, on the contrary, to draw him by simulated retreats into the depths of the deserts of Russia.

Therefore "*St. Petersburg and Moscow*" was the watchword of the French soldier, who, always careless and light-hearted, without caring for the result of the campaign, coolly asked his way, regarding the one or the other of these rich cities as the aim, the glorious end, of a long and painful march. It was at Smolensk that, astonished at the persevering retreat of the Russians, Napoleon said, "My brother Alexander wants to make me play the rôle of Charles XII."<sup>1</sup> Since he had the presentiment, why did he not stop? But his ungovernable pride, on the contrary, made him reject the advice of the King of Naples and of Prince Poniatowsky, who proposed to go into winter quarters at Smolensk and to march upon Volhynia and Ukraine. But Napoleon was seized with that mania which is the forerunner of the fall of kings, and Providence had marked the limits of his prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> Constant says, in his "Private Life of Napoleon," "At this period I saw that the Emperor usually had on his night table Voltaire's 'History of Charles XII.'"

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## CHAPTER IX

I SHALL not attempt to describe this campaign in Russia, so often treated of by abler pens. The march of the French army, seeming to be directed toward St. Petersburg, caused a feeling of general and extraordinary uneasiness in that city. Everybody wished to leave and go to the interior of Russia. People packed up their most precious belongings, to be ready at the shortest notice. The dowager empress, a strong minded and courageous woman, fearing, not for herself, but for the young and tender objects of her maternal solicitude, wished also to leave St. Petersburg and take with her all those young persons who were being educated in the numerous establishments founded and directed by her benevolent care.

The Emperor Alexander naturally feared that the departure of the empress would only alarm the people, and said to his mother with respectful firmness: "Madame, I have begged you as a son, and now I command you as emperor, to remain."

Shutting up his cruel anxieties in the depths of his own breast, he continued to show a calm and serene front, and declared publicly that he would be the last one to leave St. Petersburg. This prudent conduct had the desired effect, and tranquillity was soon restored in all classes of society.

## Emperor Alexander I.

After the departure of Napoleon from Vilna, the French commenced to raise troops in Lithuania, and to form regiments. One of my brothers was made colonel of infantry, and my eldest brother formed a company of mounted artillery at his own expense. But for want of pecuniary means this armament was formed slowly, and Napoleon wrote from his headquarters to the Duke of Bassano: "I have just received a considerable reinforcement from Lithuania. Oginiski<sup>1</sup> has arrived with *twelve men* of the new guards!"

The French who remained at Vilna with the diplomatic corps all expected a happy and speedy conclusion of the war. I remember that the Duke of Bassano, whose kindness toward my father and myself I am happy to record here, announced to me one day that General Kotousoff had taken command of the Russian army, and he said, "Now we can hope for peace soon, for Kotousoff has a talent for fighting."

The Russian *policy* seemed to count for nothing, and yet had it not also its hopes of victory? The battle of Mozhaish or of the Moskowa in promising the capture of Moscow was, in the eyes of all the French, a certain presage of peace. Already the Duke of Bassano was constantly expecting to leave for Mos-

<sup>1</sup> Count Michel Cleophas Oginiski (born 1765, died 1833). At the time of Napoleon's invasion of Italy, Oginiski succeeded in awakening his interest in Poland. While awaiting Bonaparte's active interference in behalf of the kingdom he resided in Hamburg, and afterwards in Berlin. After the treaty of Tilsit he was again on a friendly footing with the czar, and in 1810 he was a senator and Privy Councillor. The later part of his life was spent in Italy. He is the author of an interesting work entitled, "Memoirs of Poland."

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cow to arrange the preliminaries of peace, and the young exquisites who surrounded him seemed very anxious about the cold they would have to endure in that latitude. Finally the news came that the French had entered Moscow, and was celebrated as usual by a *Te Deum*.

That evening there was a dance at the Duke of Basano's, and I was astonished to see a shade of gloom and anxiety on the diplomat's face which nothing could dissipate. Nothing was talked of but the departure. The minister only waited for further details, they said. These details were the burning of Moscow, a terrible and perhaps unique example of devoted patriotism!

After this disaster, the French policy hid itself under an impenetrable veil. We learned only that Napoleon had decided to quit Moscow and return across a ravaged country; but soon all communication was cut off. Minsk, in Lithuania, fell again into the hands of the Russians. Several detachments of light cavalry, Cossacks, approached Vilna. Finally, at the end of three weeks, the diplomatic corps was still ignorant of the fate of the army of the new Cambyses, of the *grand army*. And still they continued to dance and act comedies, for above all things the French must have pleasure.

The Duchess of Reggio, wife of Marshal Oudinot,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eugénie de Coucy, Maréchale Oudinot, Duchesse de Reggio (born 1780, died 1868), was a daughter of a captain in the Artois regiment and a knight of St. Louis. In 1812 she married the Duc de Reggio. In 1815 she was appointed Mistress of the Robes to the Duchesse de Berri. She survived the duke for a number of years and occupied her time composing the "Memoirs of Marshal Oudinot, Duc de Reggio."

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arrived suddenly at Vilna to nurse her husband, who had been wounded in a duel. I shall never forget the expression with which the maréchale said, after having asked me if I had brothers in service, "Your troubles have only commenced!" These words were a prophecy only too true!

One of my relatives, who had left the French troops at Smolensk, gave us unheard-of details of the grand army. It reminded him, he said, of the Carnival of Venice, or the Toledo at Naples on Mardi-Gras; but he was regarded as a madman and a visionary.

On the 3rd of December, 1812, there was another ball at the house of the governor-general, Count Hogendorp,<sup>1</sup> to celebrate the anniversary of the accession of Napoleon to the throne, him who, abandoning his army, had fled, repeating the well known words, "There's but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous!" He travelled under the name of Count Caulincourt, and the French soldiers, to whom the necessity to make a joke is compatible with the greatest misfortunes, said, "*Oui, c'est Colin qui court* (it is Colin who is running away)."

The passage of Napoleon near Vilna was an open secret. The Duke of Bassano spoke to me of it the same day, and said he had found the emperor very *well and very cheerful*.

Napoleon breakfasted near Vilna, almost at the gates, chatting and joking with the members of his

<sup>1</sup> Count Thieny Van Hogendorp (born 1761, died 1830). A Dutch general who was minister of war under King Louis in 1806, and the following year ambassador to Vienna, and in 1809 to Berlin. Two years later he became general of division and aide-de-camp to Napoleon, whom he followed in the Russian campaign. After the battle of Waterloo he went to Brazil, where his last years were spent.

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suite and with the Duke of Bassano, while the postilion who had driven his horses fell frozen to death. But what was such an incident in the eyes of a man who had seen three quarters of his army perish with cold or hunger, or who in contemplating the plains of Mozhaish, covered with the dead, exclaimed with transport, "How beautiful is the field of battle!" The saying of Vitellius is nothing in comparison!

We soon had a spectacle that excited pity and secret terror, in the remnants of that army so triumphant and formidable six months earlier, whose rapid march and destiny had been like that of a brilliant meteor. During three or four days the streets of Vilna were filled again with a throng of men, I cannot say soldiers, since it was impossible to recognize them in that character under the grotesque garments which covered them. One had thrown away his helmet and was muffled up in a woman's velvet hood and black satin mantle, under which you could see his spurs. Another had enveloped himself in the ornaments and vestments of the church, stoles, chasubles, and altar-cloths all piled one upon another to keep out the cold, from which nothing could really protect the men. Others, more fortunate in their booty, had thrown about their shoulders ladies' fur dressing-gowns, with the sleeves tied about their necks. Others, again, trailed woollen blankets after them, or, like shades from that place from which one never returns, they advanced in grave-clothes and winding-sheets. These sombre liveries, these gloomy tokens of death figured in that *historical masquerade*, the expiring glory of a great conqueror.

Infantry, horse, and artillery, no longer recognizing

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authority, without order, without discipline and almost without arms, their faces blackened by the smoke of the bivouac, deprived by privations and physical suffering of nearly every sentiment except that of courage, which never deserts the Frenchman, they marched in confusion, imploring help and pity. My father gave shelter to a number of them, particularly to General Jumilhac,<sup>1</sup> the brother-in-law of the Duc de Richelieu<sup>2</sup> and an old acquaintance of my Aunt Radzivil. In this disastrous retreat, of all his equipment he had kept only his horse. This poor general could hardly contain himself for joy to be in a well-warmed room and have sufficient covering. He said to us while eating like a starving man, "Mesdames, you do not know what pleasure it is to eat once more seated at a table!" We could not help smiling at his black hands, which he assured us were quite clean.

M. de Jumilhac did nothing but sigh after *Acadia and his good princess*. He constantly asked us if

<sup>1</sup> Antoine Pierre Joseph Chapelle, Marquis de Jumilhac (born 1764, died 1826), entered the French army in 1777; two years later he was appointed by Louis XVI. lieutenant-colonel of his guard. For his bravery in the Russian campaign he received the Cross of the Legion of Honor. In 1815 he was appointed commander of the Order of St. Louis.

<sup>2</sup> Armand Emmanuel Duplessis, Duc de Richelieu (born 1766, died 1822) was active as an agent of the French royal family during the Revolution; entered the Russian civil service; was governor of Odessa under Alexander I. He refused to serve under Napoleon, and was prime minister under Louis XVIII. He succeeded in procuring from the Great European Powers, at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), terms much less severe than they had required from the French government in 1815. Though poor, he refused a national recompense from the Chambers, and when a pension of 50,000 francs was conferred on him he gave it to found a hospital at Bordeaux.

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this extreme cold would last long; and as we assured him in good faith that cold at 26 or 28 degrees Réaumur seldom lasted more than three days in that intensity, he thanked us as if for some veritable gift. But it seemed at this time that, to protect Russia, Heaven hurled all the rigours of an extraordinary winter upon her enemies.

Owing to the improvidence of the heads of the French government, and the demoralization of the employees of the army, all the stores of provisions and clothes, sent partly from France and partly furnished on the spot, instead of being distributed among the French soldiers, remained intact to the advantage of the Russians.

Vilna and all Lithuania prepared lint and linen in large quantities for the hospitals, but all this was sold to the paper-makers, and the soldiers were bandaged with wadding and hay.

I have these details from a hospital director, who, more honest than his colleagues, complained bitterly of these abuses, and with reason.

My father, being a member of the provisory government, was obliged to follow the French army. At the moment of his departure he gave me a few words of advice as to the course of conduct I was to pursue to save at least a remnant of his fortune; for all who left on this occasion expected to see their property confiscated.

My father said I would do well to go to St. Petersburg if the emperor did not come to Vilna, and he promised to return if I should succeed in giving him reassuring intelligence as to his own personal safety. He departed. My brothers had left before him. I



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had seen a great number of the ladies of my acquaintance depart. I remained alone. It was a gloomy and overwhelming moment. I remained alone, not yet knowing what would be the fate of the town,—what Vilna had to expect from the clemency of the Russians, and ignorant of the designs of the French government. It was proposed to the King of Naples, who commanded the remnant of the army, to defend Vilna. He refused this proposition, using a comparison so indecent, in describing the position of the town, that it is impossible for me to repeat it here. He refused also to set fire to the arsenal and powder magazines. The explosion of these two buildings would have destroyed the greater part of the town.

On the day of the retaking of Vilna by the Russian troops, I was awakened by the sound of cannon. They were knocking at the doors of the town in the mountain gorge called Ponary, where such a great number of the French perished. The combat was neither long nor doubtful, and soon I saw the long lances, the pointed caps, the shaggy mantles, and the long beards of my old acquaintances, the Cossacks. This sight filled me with joy, none the less when several of them,—not to lose the opportunity for, or the habit of, pillage,—under the pretext of searching for French equipages, came to take my carriage. My people, greatly alarmed, came to tell me. I succeeded in intimidating the Cossacks by speaking firmly, and made them all leave the house. I was very well satisfied with my success; nevertheless, I took the precaution to ask the brave General Czaplic for protection. He was the first man to enter Vilna.

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Marshal Kotousoff entered in triumph two days later and came to see me. I had known him for a long time. He praised my conduct at my presentation to Napoleon, and said he would take care to inform the emperor of it. He told me also that my father had done very wrong to leave Vilna and thus show his want of confidence in the generous character of his Majesty.

The marshal gave a soirée for me, where he presented all his generals to me, saying: "This is the young countess who wore her decoration *à la barbe* (in the very beard) of Napoleon." The reports of that action, so simple, so natural, were so exaggerated that it was rumored abroad that I had followed my brothers to the French army; that I had been seen on the route to Moscow, playing the heroine, and riding a gray horse in the midst of the ranks, clad in a blue amazon. Several Russian military men assured me that they had been ordered to take me prisoner.

The marshal seemed almost weighed down with his successes and the honors which he had received and the distinctions which came in from all directions. He had just been made Prince of Smolensk. He had a decoration with the portrait of the emperor set in diamonds upon the blue cockade. The grand order of St. George had been promised him. Nevertheless he was unsatisfied, he said, for not having been able to make himself master of the person of Napoleon. I observed on his table a superb ministerial portfolio of black velvet, having the arms of France embroidered in gold on one side, and the crest of Napoleon on the other. The



GENERAL KOTOUSOFF.



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marshal destined this portfolio for the Princess Kotousoff.

A person of the company having hazarded some remark about the disasters of Moscow, "What!" cried the grand marshal, "the road from Moscow to Vilna is worth two Moscows!"

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## CHAPTER X

LITTLE by little tranquillity was again restored in the town of Vilna; but what tranquillity! It is true that the chances of war were no more to be feared, but the picture of suffering humanity was constantly before our eyes. We could not stir into the streets without encountering the dead bodies of the French soldiers, either frozen to death or murdered by the Jews, who had killed them to get their watches, money, or any other articles which they had about them. The slightest thaw showed traces of blood on the pavements and even in the *portes cochères* of some of our houses. Jewish women and even children were seen robbing the dead soldiers, or if they were not quite dead, killing them by kicks with their iron-bound shoes.

The bodies of these unfortunates were to be seen, frozen stiff in the attitudes in which death had found them,—some sitting, some bent forward with their faces in their hands, others leaning against a wall with the fist closed in a menacing attitude. One would have thought them asleep, but it was the sleep of death.

In the search made by the police in the town and its environs, the bodies of about forty thousand French soldiers were found. In entering our country the French had brought disorder and pillage, in quitting it they left disease and death. A contagious fever, known as hospital fever, broke out and caused unheard-of ravages, destroying a

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large part of the population on the path of the grand army. The hospitals of Vilna were infected, and a great number of the inhabitants of the town fell victims to this new scourge. And still the French prisoners wandered freely about the city. Nothing can ever efface from my memory these walking spectres. I can see them still with wan, emaciated features, and eyes of which only the whites could be seen, as they sat and warmed themselves at the fires which were kindled before our houses to keep away the infection. I have often seen them searching in the garbage of the street for something to satisfy their hunger, which was not the least of their sufferings. One could apply to them the line of La Fontaine, —

*“Ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés.”*

One day I was going out of a convent where my aunt was abbess. They had given me a quantity of cakes, gingerbread, etc. At the door I saw several prisoners who asked charity, and I gave them all the cakes. They fell upon them with such voraciousness that I was frightened. My companion, who could not rid herself of the contents of her bag as quickly as I, stood stifled, if I may use that word, in the midst of the unfortunates who pressed around her, until I sent my servant, who succeeded in rescuing her from their hands, and she rejoined me pale and trembling.

I had taken into my house one of these poor creatures, whose mental faculties had been destroyed by suffering. As I asked him if he wanted anything, he answered with a wan smile: “I need nothing. I am a dead man.” It was impossible to get any

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other answer from him. I cannot tell how that smile haunted me. The poor man escaped one day, and no one ever knew what became of him. I had a whole family of prisoners at my house afterwards: a man, his wife and child. The man was from Genoa and had been a shoemaker for the troops; his wife was from Nice. In speaking of the horrors of the hospital she said, in her soft Southern accent, "Madame, you would have been sorry to see it!" The child, with his golden hair and large dark eyes, reminded one of Raphael's cherubs. This poor little unfortunate was not yet two years old. He did not recover from his sufferings. He died in the country, where I had sent him with his parents. I kept them a long time in my house. These poor people, in the midst of the snows and frosts of this terrible winter, used to talk of the flowers and perfumes of their own country, and of the balmy air of the nights on the sea-coast at Genoa *la superba*.

Misfortune had destroyed in the poor prisoners even the love of life and the desire to live. In their abstraction they would kindle a fire on the floor in the middle of a room and sitting round it would let themselves be slowly consumed by the flames. It was in this way that the military hospital at Zakret was burned down, and similar accidents occurred several times in different villages.

In contrast to this picture of misery, we saw the Cossacks, enriched by pillage, selling wedges of gold and silver, strings of pearls, watches, and jewels for a very small price in paper money. They also continued to pillage in the country. I had constantly to ask the marshal for safeguards for my acquaint-



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ances, and he used to say to me, "You see these rascals never have enough, but I will make them disgorge;" and he really did oblige the Cossacks to furnish a certain number of ingots of silver for the statues of the twelve apostles, at the church of Saint Mary of Kāzan<sup>1</sup> at St. Petersburg. The Cossacks sold at Vilna several children of the unfortunate French, who had left Moscow to follow the grand army. These poor little creatures, passing from the maternal breast to the strong arms of their strange protectors, having only voice enough still to cry, could not even tell the names of their parents, who had perished, no doubt, in the retreat.

An Italian singer, Soprano Torquinio, whom I had formerly known at Vilna where he had given singing lessons, was at Moscow at the time of the French occupation. He sang every evening for Napoleon, who always asked for the music of Paesiello.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Church of St. Mary of Kazan, one of the oldest churches in St. Petersburg. Its interior is in the shape of a cross. It is especially rich in trophies of the war with Persia and France. The baton of Davoust and the keys of many fortresses are suspended against the pillars of this military looking cathedral. Among the keys are those of Hamburg, Leipsic, Dresden, Rheines, Breda, and Utrecht. The tomb of General Kutusov is here. He lies buried on a spot where he knelt in prayer before setting out to meet the enemy in 1812. The *ikonostas* and the balustrade in front of the altar are of silver, being the "zealous offering of the Don Cossacks" after the campaign of 1812. The silver weighs nearly half a ton.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Paesiello, or Paisiello (born 1741, died 1816), an Italian composer. At the age of twenty he was a prolific composer of masses, psalms, motets, etc. In 1776 he accepted an invitation from Catherine II. to establish himself at St. Petersburg, where he remained nine years, producing several operas and oratorios. Some of his best works belong to this period, particularly *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Going to Vienna he produced operas for the Emperor Joseph II. On his return to Naples (1785) he was appointed Royal

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was taken prisoner by the Cossacks and brought to Vilna, where he obtained his liberty. Torquinio told me very curious stories about his captors. Every evening when they returned to camp after a pillaging expedition, the Cossacks amused themselves by dressing up like French marshals and generals in the clothes which they had taken during the day. Poor Torquinio and his companion Nina, also a good musician, were obliged to sing to earn their supper. The Cossacks, seated on the hard frozen snow around a fire whose flame lighted up their savage faces, dressed in the rich costumes which were strikingly incongruous with those who wore them,—the Cossacks, I say, seemed to take a never-ending delight in the harmonious language and songs of the South.

A thousand such recitals formed the subjects of conversation in the society of Vilna that winter. How we hated the author of all these evils and sufferings! I remember one day at a party we were inventing different kinds of torture for Napoleon. When my time came I said, "I would have Napoleon drowned in the tears he has caused to be shed!"

Among these scenes of desolation, I had a trouble which was entirely personal. I received no news whatever from my father and brothers. I was often told that they had been made prisoners, which was the happiest thing in these circumstances.

Chapel Master. In 1802 he accepted an invitation by Bonaparte to go to Paris; two years later he returned to Naples. Paisiello's works comprise twenty-seven grand, fifty-one buffo operas, eight interludes, and a vast collection of cantatas, oratorios, masses, etc. One authority says: "He is superior to his rivals in the suavity of his melody and the charm of his expression."

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XI

A FORTNIGHT had not yet passed since the return of the Russians to Vilna. I awoke one morning with that sadness, that heaviness of the heart which had become habitual to me. In that first instant of wakening I could not tell whether I was suffering from a present misfortune or only the expectation of a new calamity, when suddenly some one came to announce that the emperor had arrived that night. "Ah," I cried, bursting into tears, "the angel of deliverance has come; we shall be saved!"

During the morning I received a visit from the good Count Tolstoi, whom I saw again with real pleasure. He brought me the *thanks* of our beloved sovereign. We talked a long time of the calamities caused by the war, and consoled ourselves mutually for the past by the hopes of a happier future. Count Tolstoi was about to leave, when suddenly on the stairs he remembered the real object of his visit, and returning hastily, he said: "I beg ten thousand pardons, but I had forgotten to say that his Majesty charged me to ask you, if he could come and see you this evening, if you would allow him that pleasure." I could not help laughing when he had gone, promising myself to tell the emperor this new trait of memory in the grand marshal.

Happy to see the emperor, I felt nevertheless an inexpressible anxiety in thinking of my father and brothers. They had left their country to follow a

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faction opposed to their sovereign. To be sure, they had been compelled to do it, in a measure, but the fact remained. What should I say to him? What would he say to me? How extremely embarrassing and perplexing! But the presence of Alexander, the kind expressions of that which he chose to call gratitude, and the thankfulness which I felt that he seemed pleased with a slight proof of devotion on my part, soon dissipated the doubts which had arisen in my mind, and left me calm to enjoy in security the pleasure of seeing him again. Finally, with that delicacy of perception which he possessed in a high degree, he seemed to guess my sufferings, and introduced the painful subject himself with the following words:

“I owe no grudge against the Lithuanians. They were obliged to yield to force. The secret of our operations was unknown to them. They could not foresee either the course or the tendency of events. Moreover, it was but natural that they should wish to recover their country. Nevertheless, the Emperor Napoleon had no intention of realizing their hopes in that respect, since he refused positively *all the propositions which I made him*, through the agency of Balacheff, at the beginning of the campaign. I was resolved to make great sacrifices to maintain peace and the liberty of commerce, without which my States, owing to their geographical position, could not maintain themselves.

“One real proof,” continued Alexander, “that Napoleon never thought of re-establishing Poland is, that he would not accept the concessions that I was ready to make to him. I should only have lost a conquered territory. The empire would have re-

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mained intact. He would not accept it, and I was forced, in consequence, to follow a plan whose success has been the result of our perseverance and the protection of Heaven.

"We could not risk the chances of war against skilful generals, against an army for twenty years accustomed to conquer, and commanded by a great captain whose military genius was never disappointed until now. . . . Rather than relinquish this plan and accept the conditions which Napoleon wished to impose on me, I had decided to make a sacrifice, not only of Moscow, but of St. Petersburg, and to retire to Kazan in the depths of Russia, as far as the frontiers of Asia, if it were necessary. I should still have lost nothing of the original territories of Russia, for St. Petersburg is built on Swedish territory and Moscow is an old conquest.

"But," added the prince, smiling, "at all events I should have reserved the possibility of returning. I repeat," continued he, "I have nothing against the Lithuanians; it is we who have abandoned them, but that shall not happen again."

His Majesty then told me that he had passed many sad moments since his sojourn at Vilna and during the six months of the campaign.

"I have suffered much, I have felt great anxiety," said he. "There was much agitation among the great minds at St. Petersburg, the greater number of whom were not satisfied with the military operations at the beginning of the campaign. Under the preceding reign and under that of the Empress Catherine nobody troubled himself about the affairs of the State, but to-day everybody must be initiated into the mys-

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teries of the government. And how can I satisfy all these opinions? I do not possess the happy philosophy of Napoleon, and this unfortunate campaign has cost me ten years of my life." Unfortunate and yet victorious! He was triumphant! But his magnanimous heart could not rejoice over his successes while he saw humanity suffer.

To spare the emperor's feelings from the sight of the miseries caused by this cruel war, a new road had been made, which kept him off the route which the armies had followed. But one could not prevent his meeting some poor, wandering French soldiers. He either gave them help or took them on his sledge. He brought thus a sick French soldier to the castle of Postawy, belonging to my father. The emperor passed the night there, left money for the poor fellow, and begged them to take care of him. Such was the conduct of this prince toward his enemies; they ceased to be enemies as soon as they were unfortunate.

Napoleon's conduct was very different: he abandoned, in their distress, his own soldiers, the instruments of his fortune and glory.

The Emperor Alexander was three days in coming from St. Petersburg to Vilna, travelling in an open sledge, which is much worse than to pass the night in camp. He said, laughing, "It has cost me the end of my nose to come to Vilna!"

Tea was served. The emperor liked tea and took a great deal. Mademoiselle F., who made it, presented a cup to his Majesty, who refused to take it before me, saying, "Although a Northern barbarian, I know what I owe to ladies."

The emperor asked me a great many questions

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about my presentation to Napoleon. I related simply what had happened on that occasion. His Majesty said I had shown *astonishing* courage in not fearing him, before whom even men trembled. I answered that I was very happy to be able to give the only proof of devotion which was in my power, and that I had never expected to receive such a recompense as the approbation of my sovereign. He asked what impression Napoleon had made on me. I answered that his physique had not corresponded with the expectation which his genius had given me.

"That is exactly the impression he made on me," said the emperor. "Did you notice his clear gray eyes, which are so piercing that you can hardly bear his look?"

"I found nothing at all imposing in the person of Napoleon," I said; "and I acknowledge, even, that in spite of the exceeding goodness of your Majesty, I feel more timidity in your presence than I felt when I was presented to Napoleon, of whom I knew little that was amiable, and only the total want of graciousness in his intercourse with ladies."

"How is it possible that I should inspire fear?" said the emperor.

"Yes, sire, that of displeasing you."

These words received very graceful thanks.

The emperor asked me also if I had seen the King of Naples.<sup>1</sup> I answered that I had only seen him from

<sup>1</sup> "It is an historical fact that the King of Naples greatly awed these barbarians [i. e. Russians]. It is certain that there was a touch of the theatrical in the appearance of the King of Naples which fascinated their eyes. He was always very richly dressed." (The Private Life of Napoleon, Memoirs of Constant.)



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my window, and that he had seemed to me like a theatre king, with his yellow boots and his big plumes *à la* Henri IV.

"Yes," said the emperor, "he has adopted the dress, but not the sentiments of Henri IV. I am sorry you did not hear him speak. He has a Gascon accent. At my first interview with Napoleon I saw near him a young Turk, who was presented to me under the name and title of Grand Duke of Berg, brother-in-law of the emperor. Upon another occasion he appeared in a rose-colored uniform with green facings and Spanish slashings."

When I mentioned a new favor which Napoleon had just accorded to his brother-in-law, his Majesty said: "He is too good to him; he ought to have him shot, for it is to him he owes his ruin in having destroyed the French cavalry."

His Majesty laughed when I told him what Napoleon had said at the presentation: "*The Emperor Alexander is very amiable. He has won you all here. Ladies, are you good Poles?*"

While we chatted I scraped lint, and the emperor said such a pleasant thing about it that I must repeat it, to show the grace and delicacy of his wit even in the most trifling matters. "One would almost be willing to be wounded for the privilege of using the lint," he said.

Speaking of certain particulars relating to Napoleon's stay at Vilna and the services which he required of his grand dignitaries, such as Caulincourt holding the steps for him to descend from the carriage, the emperor exclaimed: "How could he thus degrade the person of an ambassador? What



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pleasure could he find in being thus served by his chamberlains and grand equerries? Am I not better waited on by my servant than by all these court carpet-sweepers?" Then he added: "Happily, we are coming to the opinion that a place at court is an honorable career, and that those who fill it have other duties, either military service or the administration of the government."

*The philosopher on the throne*, as Napoleon called him, appeared in those words, especially in his indifference to the pomp with which sovereign power usually surrounds itself. Mademoiselle F. acknowledged that for her part she found *all that very fine*. "It is a vain kind of splendor which pleases you," answered the emperor. Then he spoke those beautiful words which I have already quoted, which, however, may be repeated again: "One must be in my place to form an idea of the responsibility of a sovereign, and to know what I feel in thinking that I must one day render an account to God for the life of each one of my soldiers. No, the throne is not my *vocation*, and if I could honorably change my condition I would do it gladly." How surprising was this language at such a moment, and from the lips of the prince who had triumphed over his most terrible adversary, the ruler of Europe.

"I am badly seconded in my views for the happiness of my people," continued he; "in fact, sometimes I should like to break my head against the wall, on seeing myself surrounded by such egoists, who neglect the good and the interests of the State, and think only of their own fortune and elevation." What beautiful sentiments! What an angelic soul this prince showed,

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in his love of peace, in his contempt for luxury and ambition, and for courtiers in general.

Then he said: "Why could not all the sovereigns and nations of Europe agree among themselves to live like brothers, aiding each other in their need and comforting each other in their adversity? Commerce would become the common property of this great society, whose several members would without doubt differ in religious belief, but a spirit of toleration would unite all churches. It matters little to the All-Powerful, I believe, whether we pray to him in Latin or in Greek, so long as we do our duty toward him and toward our fellow-men. It is not always the longest prayers which touch him most."

"Sire," I said, "I have made many long prayers for you."

He seemed moved, and thanked me with his accustomed graciousness: "The prayers of a person as innocent as you ought to be granted." I ventured to observe that if all men followed the teachings of the gospel, teachings so gentle, so well adapted to each one, they could dispense with other laws, in adopting the principles contained in that Book divine. The emperor approved of my idea.

I could wish that all kings had been in my place, to hear and remember the words of this prince and to make them the rule of their conduct.

His Majesty then turned the conversation to the works of the philosophers of the eighteenth century: Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, and others. Of the first, I was acquainted only with the tragedies, historical works, and the "Henriade," and I knew almost nothing of the second. The emperor assured

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me that the philosophy of Rousseau was not so dangerous to religion as the writings of Voltaire. Many of the ideas of that philanthropic and eloquent writer seemed to be to the taste of the prince, and to suit the turn of his mind. I thought I observed also a certain resemblance between the ideas of the emperor upon universal peace, and the works of de Sainte-Pierre on that subject. His Majesty spoke with great praise of "The Genius of Christianity," a production, he said, as justly celebrated as its author. He referred to the philosophy of Kant, so deep and so abstract that one might regard it as incomprehensible. Perhaps Kant himself did not possess the key to it.

Suddenly, in the midst of this grave conversation, the emperor interrupted himself, laughing. "I have employed my time well," he said, "in delivering a lecture on moral philosophy to a pretty woman! If any one could hear me, I should certainly be laughed at." I hastened to reply that I would endeavor to profit by the lecture, and would be the better for it, thanks to his Majesty's patience. "Ah, you have no need of it; you are already better than we. Besides," said he, "this kind of conversation is not suitable to all women. There are those who must always have only stories."

The conversation returned to Napoleon. Alexander was with reason astonished at the improvidence which had led this great warrior to risk himself with six hundred thousand men, without supplies, without any kind of provisions, in a devastated country, in the midst of the deserts of Russia. This want of foresight had necessarily led to marauding and

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insubordination in the army. Napoleon said himself to persons who begged him to use severe measures to prevent pillage, "What will you have me do? They must live."

The emperor continued: "Napoleon thought he could make the Russians revolt by offering them, in divers proclamations, the allurements of liberty. He was, however, impolitic to wound the religious feelings of the Russian people, by letting the French soldiers commit acts of impiety in churches and sacred places. Seeing the objects of their worship outraged and spoiled, the Russians saw only a snare in the offers made them, and instead of running to meet their pretended liberators, they, ever faithful to God and to their sovereign, retired to the depths of the forests with their wives, children, and cattle, setting fire to their own homes and never ceasing to harass the hostile troops. *Oh, my Barbary horse!*" exclaimed the emperor, with a sort of enthusiasm. "They were worth more than we were! It is there that we find once more the morals of patriarchal times, a profound respect for religion, the love of God, and a complete devotion to the sovereign!"

Alexander then spoke of the service which the Jews had rendered in the campaign by burning a bridge to retard the march of the French. "They have shown a wonderful attachment," said he.

"Yes, very wonderful," I repeated, only thinking in that instant of the cruelties practised by the Jews in Vilna; then, perceiving immediately that my exclamation was a little more than naïve, I corrected myself and added, "Not at all, sire, if I may judge from my own experience."

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The emperor spoke again of the person of Napoleon, his short stature, etc. "Sire," I said, "it is very seldom that a sovereign unites all these advantages."

"But that is not without example," said Mademoiselle F.

"Ah! without doubt," replied I.

Guessing the application at once, he covered his face with both hands, and laughing said, "A truce to compliments, I beg of you."

The town was to give a grand ball on the morrow in honor of the emperor's birthday, but his Majesty refused the homage. He said to me with reference to this refusal: "I thought that in these circumstances dancing or even the sound of music could not be agreeable." I hastened to applaud a thought so just and so right.

At the moment of quitting me his Majesty renewed his kind assurances of interest and good-will. I conducted him as far as the antechamber, where his favorite coachman, Ilia, awaited him. The latter had taken tea with my servants while, by my order, some one attended to the emperor's horses. This man was delighted with the evening he had passed, which had been rather noisy; for bursts of loud and prolonged laughter could be heard as far as the drawing-room where I was with the emperor, who paid no attention to it.

Ilia assured my people that he made a part of the friendly reception to his master, whom, he said, it would not fail to please. This servant merited the unlimited attachment which the emperor had for him. A very touching anecdote is told of him. The emperor was accustomed to go about the streets of

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St. Petersburg in a *dorochka*, or a sledge if it was in winter, drawn by one horse driven by Ilia.

One day, as he made the circuit, Ilia drove him into a side street, dirty and badly built. "Why do you bring me into this quarter?" asked the emperor. Ilia turned back immediately. Another day he drove the emperor again to the same place. His Majesty, greatly surprised, said: "It is not without a design that you always drive me into this street!" Ilia answered: "If your Majesty will permit, I will tell him why, a little farther on." The emperor consented. When they had come to a small cottage Ilia stopped. "Sire," said he, "here is the house belonging to the widow of my old master, of him who ceded me to your Majesty." The emperor did not reply, but when he had returned to the palace, he sent Ilia a sum of money for his old mistress, with the promise of a pension for the rest of her life. The husband of this lady had lost his entire fortune, and died leaving his widow in extreme poverty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the death of the Emperor Alexander, nothing could induce Ilia to leave the body of his beloved master. He conducted it from Taganrog to St. Petersburg, and every night, in spite of the intense cold and his advanced age, he slept on the hearse which carried that precious relic.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XII

THE Emperor Alexander had a reception of the gentlemen at court on his birthday. Several persons of the small number of the Lithuanian nobility still remaining at Vilna came to see me on leaving the castle. These gentlemen were struck with the emperor's imposing manner and with the words with which he addressed them. "Gentlemen," said the prince, looking round at the company, "I must complain of a great many Lithuanians; I am pleased with very few among them; but I like to pass the sponge over the past, hoping that you will not place yourselves again in the position to have recourse to my indulgence."

In the morning I received an invitation to pass the evening at Marshal Kotousoff's. The emperor had dined there, and they said vaguely that he would return in the evening. I was surprised, on arriving at the marshal's to find preparations for dancing, musicians, and a crowd of young officers. At the moment of the arrival of the emperor they threw the flags lately taken from the enemy at his Majesty's feet. I saw that he recoiled with a modest motion from this ovation. An instant later he entered the cabinet of the marshal. The latter soon returned and said to me, "We have just been doing some work for you." Not understanding what the marshal meant, I asked an explanation.

It referred to an act of amnesty in favor of the



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Lithuanians which the emperor had just signed; a beautiful act, to signalize the day of his birth by the pardon of offences!

When the emperor came to ask me to dance he said: "You will be surprised, after what I said yesterday, to find me here at a ball. But what could I do? I had to give pleasure to this old fellow." It was thus that the emperor designated the marshal. "*This old fellow ought to be contented. The cold has done him good service.*" He had just given the *old fellow* the order of St. Andrew in diamonds, and a magnificent sword of honor, also set in large diamonds, and a wreath of laurels in emeralds, of which the marshal found the stones too small, laughingly saying he would have to call the emperor's attention to it.

This ball, where I saw only Russian officers, with the exception of two or three Lithuanians, transported me in imagination to St. Petersburg; and the illusion would have been complete, had it not been in the room where I had seen Napoleon and the French. I said to the emperor that in the space of six months, without having quitted Vilna, I had seen nearly all the nations of Europe, and that they had produced on me the effect of a magic lantern. The emperor made a very just observation, saying, "Napoleon has shown himself the best ally of Russia, in making his own army perish." The marshal presented to his Majesty a Russian lady who had followed her husband to the war, and into the thickest of the fight. "I do not approve of that kind of courage in a woman," said the emperor when she had moved away. "There is another way in which they can distinguish themselves, in a manner more worthy of



## Emperor Alexander I.

themselves, and more becoming to their sex," added he, giving me a pleasant look.

Every day the Emperor Alexander, followed by his staff, went on foot to the parade in the square of the Hôtel-de-Ville nearly opposite my windows. I could hear him say to the soldiers, "*Zdarowa, rabiata?*" that is to say, "How are you, my children?" And the soldiers would reply, "We are all well, sire; and your Majesty?"

This affection between the sovereign and the army, between the father and the children of his adoption, and the murmur of all these manly voices was solemn and touching.

As I complimented the emperor upon the good condition of his troops, who had never been in want during the whole campaign, he said with a sigh: "They have also suffered very much. One sees here only the bright side." Alexander found it unjust that in France the Imperial Guards received better pay than the regular infantry.

Marshal Kotousoff offered to take charge of a letter to my father, in which I should try to induce him to return to Lithuania. He promised to send the letter by a Jewish spy and courier to the army. My father received it at Warsaw, which was still in the hands of the French. This letter, written with great circumspection, and which had been under the eyes of the emperor and of the marshal, made a great sensation among the agents of the French government. They thought that my father was keeping up secret intelligence with the Russians. He was obliged to promise to follow the French, and only succeeded with great difficulty in helping the poor unfortunate Jew to escape.

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## CHAPTER XIII

THE Emperor Alexander, during his six weeks' stay at Vilna, consecrated every moment that he could spare from the affairs of the government and military details to the relief of suffering humanity. Always accompanied by General Saint-Priest, he went through the hospitals in person, with a fearlessness of contagion which made us all tremble for his life. Everywhere order was re-established at his word, and hope returned to the hearts of the miserable prisoners. One poor French woman, with two little children, came and threw herself at the feet of the emperor as he returned from the parade one day. The tears of these poor unfortunates caused his own to flow, and he hastened to give them help.

A soldier to whom I had given shelter related to me that, seeing a young and handsome Russian officer passing by, who had a "*good face*," he stopped him to ask charity; and that the handsome young man ordered him to go to the kitchen of the imperial palace and to say that the brother of the grand duke had sent him there that he might get something to eat. "I did it," said the soldier, "just as he told me, and I had a *famous good chaw*!" The soldier did not know, till I told him, that *the brother of the grand duke* was no other than the emperor.

The news of the death of the Duke of Oldenburg, the brother-in-law of Alexander, a victim to the hospital fever, redoubled our fears for the life of the

## Emperor Alexander I.

emperor. The day before his departure, his Majesty having come to pass the evening with me, I ventured to tell him my fears, and to beg him to take care of a life which was so precious and dear to us all. "One has nothing to fear from these contagious diseases," answered the emperor, "as long as one has no apprehension, if one has a healthy constitution. Unfortunately that was not the case with my brother-in-law, and he has succumbed."

I had myself experienced what the emperor said. I was daily with persons attacked by the hospital fever in my own house, yet I enjoyed perfect health. I never felt any unpleasant consequences. I asked the emperor if it was true that he had been recognized on his visits to the hospitals. "Yes," said he, "in the officers' ward, but generally they have taken me for the aide-de-camp of General Saint-Priest." The emperor related a story in this connection which touched him very much, and me equally. A Spanish officer lay dying on his bed of straw. He had finished dictating a letter to his comrade, when General Saint-Priest, followed by the emperor, approached to speak to him. "Monsieur," said the Spaniard, with a feeble voice, addressing Alexander, whom he took for the aide-de-camp of the Russian general, "have the goodness to take charge of this letter. It is the last farewell which I address to my wife in Spain." "I will send the letter," said the emperor. He then had all the Spanish prisoners assembled, and sent them at his own expense by sea to their native country.

The picture which the emperor drew of the French hospital which he had visited in the university buildings made us shiver with horror and froze the blood

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in our veins. "It was in the evening," said his Majesty. "One single lamp lighted the high vaulted room, in which they had heaped up the piles of corpses as high as the walls. I cannot express the horror I felt, when in the midst of these inanimate bodies, I suddenly saw living beings. And now," continued he, "nobody will follow me in my visits to the hospitals. My young people, who are enchanted to go to a duel or an assault, hasten to find some plausible reason for not accompanying me when I go to do my duty."

In speaking of the disorder which prevailed in the French administration, his Majesty said: "I wish that the Emperor Napoleon could be informed to what a degree he has been badly served by all those who possessed his confidence."

The conversation turned naturally to the insatiable ambition of the great captain, to the excesses and evils which that ambition had drawn down upon France and the whole of Europe. "Good heavens!" said Alexander, placing both hands on his forehead, "What a brilliant career that man could still run! He could give peace to Europe. He could, and he has not done it! Now the charm is broken! We shall see which will succeed best, to make one's self feared, or to make one's self loved."

What noble emulation in these words! To make one's self loved! Yes, that was the secret of Alexander's policy. During the whole course of his reign, it was always *as friend to friend* that he treated with the sovereigns of Europe.

Then I said, "It is not Napoleon who will have the glory of bringing peace to Europe."

## Emperor Alexander I.

“What difference does it make,” answered he, “whether it is he or I or another who makes peace, so long as it is done?” When I said I hoped it would take place in the spring, “Why not this winter? The sooner the better,” he replied with much warmth.

The emperor so desired the accomplishment of this peace, the object of all his wishes and thoughts, that he felt he was losing time at Vilna. “Not that I am not pleased to be here,” added the prince, “but on account of the march of political events which it is so important to hasten, to prevent Napoleon from reuniting his forces on the Vistula. We have been obliged to give the troops some rest after those hard marches.”

The Emperor Alexander’s modesty made him absolutely suffer when any one addressed him with words of eulogy, even if these were true. I told him we had lately been looking into history to find a prince whom we could place on a level with his Majesty. He would not allow me to continue. “A truce to compliments, I beg of you,” he said, bowing.

I do not remember in what connection we spoke again of the family of Napoleon. Mademoiselle F. praised the character of Lucien Bonaparte. “No,” said the emperor, coldly, “I should not like to resemble him;” then suddenly he cried with enthusiasm, “but I should like to be Moreau. There, is a really great man!” Then he enumerated the merits and talents of that able general. One might suppose that Alexander had already chosen, in his own mind, this French patriot for the execution of his political and warlike designs.

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I spoke to the emperor of a portrait of Napoleon's son, then the King of Rome, which promised a strong resemblance to his father. "That is very fortunate for him, if we may believe all that is said in regard to his birth," said the emperor. Then he continued: "How much it is to be regretted that the French sacrifice themselves thus for a man who despises them from the bottom of his heart, at the same time accomplishing such grand things through them and by them. In my interview with Napoleon at Erfurt, in reference to some remarks which I had made upon the manner of governing that nation, he said to me: 'You do not know the French. They must be driven, as I do it, with a rod of iron.' I recognize to-day the truth of what Talleyrand then said to me, that peace was necessary to France. I generally mistrust all these *gray-beards* in politics. Being influenced, besides, by the great military power of the French and the talents of their chief, I believed that, in talking to me in this strain, Talleyrand wanted to ensnare me and to prejudice my mind. To-day, results prove that the diplomat was right, and that after so disastrous a campaign in Russia, and the great reverses which France has just met with in Spain, she must be entirely drained of men and of money."

In hearing the emperor speak of Napoleon's contempt for his compatriots, Mademoiselle F. said it was a great pity that France could not be enlightened as to the disasters of the war, and the lies with which Napoleon had the army bulletins filled. "We have had the precaution," said the emperor, "to have printed intelligence thrown in on all sides of France,

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and in all the ports, to deliver that country from the blindness in which she is plunged, and in which every effort is made to keep her. We know, moreover, that De Malet's<sup>1</sup> conspiracy is far from being suppressed, and that there are many malcontents in France. We must hope that all these events will unite in promoting the result desired,—a solid peace in Europe. After the violent blows which she has received during the last thirty years, Europe has great need of repose."

It would be difficult for me to say, from the different ideas thrown into the conversation, whether the Emperor Alexander then really desired the fall of Napoleon, or even believed that fall possible; but in speaking of Napoleon he repeated several times an expression which was very remarkable, "*The charm is broken.*" Perhaps he thought only of that whose influence he himself had felt.

The Emperor Alexander said that in adopting revolutionary language the French had forgotten their own tongue. "It is very astonishing," added he, "but they no longer speak French."

The emperor had a right to be a little difficult to please on that point, as he always used the choicest and most elegant expressions.

<sup>1</sup> Claude François de Malet (born 1754, died 1812), a French general and conspirator. About 1806 he was dismissed from the service and went to Paris, where he plotted against Napoleon; and for this he was imprisoned from 1806 to 1812. Having formed another conspiracy, he announced at the barracks in Paris, October 24, 1812, that Bonaparte had died in Russia, and that he (De Malet) had been appointed Governor of Paris by the Senate. By forged orders he imposed on the prefect of Paris, made Savary prisoner, and shot General Hullin. At this crisis he was made a prisoner and shot after a summary process.



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I do not know where his Majesty had become acquainted with Marshal Oudinot, the Duke of Reggio, but he spoke of him as a man of intelligence, and showed his satisfaction at the behavior of the marshal at Smolensk or at Witepsk, where he persuaded the inhabitants not to revolt against their rightful sovereign.

Alexander, in speaking of the defects of modern education, said: "Our young people think they know everything when they have learned to dance and to speak French. You can form no idea," he added, "to what an extent the morals of our people are corrupted. No one believes it possible to have a real friendship, a disinterested affection, for a woman who is not our mother, our wife, or our sister."

His Majesty then spoke with wisdom and sagacity of the different systems adopted in Europe to simplify the mode of instruction,—among others the system of Pestalozzi, which seemed too mechanical and artificial to the emperor, and little adapted to develop the mind.

"To smooth away the difficulties of study by dint of force, they make nothing but machines out of the young people," said the prince.

I do not know upon what foundations the authors of the two histories of Alexander have been pleased to attribute to the exalted imagination of Madame Krüdener<sup>1</sup> the idea of the Holy Alliance and a uni-

<sup>1</sup> Juliane de Vietinghoff, Baroness Krüdener (born 1764, died 1824). She was carefully educated in the house of her father, one of the wealthiest proprietors in Livonia, and she was early remarkable for her intelligence and for a tendency to revery and melancholy. While very young she married a Russian diplomatist, Baron Krüdener, whom she accompanied to Venice and afterwards to Copenhagen



# Emperor Alexander I.

versal peace, — a noble project, which could only have had birth in the mind of Alexander himself.

Neither at that time nor afterwards, when on several occasions he conversed with me, did the emperor pronounce the name of the author of *Valérie*, although he often spoke of the celebrated literary men of past times and of the present, and even of women distinguished for their wit and intelligence, such as Madame de Staël, whose great talents he admired. I was surprised that he passed in silence the name of Madame de Genlis, whose pen, equally harmonious and productive, has written so many useful and interesting works on religion and morals, — works which will always assure to her the gratitude of all mothers.

His Majesty having deigned to ask me about my family, I told him that I had heard that my brothers had remained in Lithuania.

and Paris. Of a singularly naïve and romantic character, she was guilty of numerous indiscretions which led to a separation from her husband in 1791. In 1803 she published her romance, "*Valéria*." Returning to Rigi she resolved to change her manner of life and devote herself solely to the conversion of sinners and the consolation of the wretched. At Paris in 1814 she held religious assemblies in her house, which were frequented by the most important personages. Her spiritual exaltation assumed the character of prevision, and in a letter she foretold in vague terms the escape and return of Napoleon from Elba, and his triumphant return to Paris. This letter was communicated to Alexander, in whom it awakened great interest toward her. She met him at Heilbronn in May, 1815, and accompanied him to Heidelberg, the headquarters of the Allies, and after Waterloo, to Paris. In 1818, she returned to Russia, where the emperor continued his interest in her romantic views, but forbade her to preach publicly. She formed a scheme for founding a colony in the Crimea, which was to consist of her disciples. Not long after her arrival at the site selected, the malady which had afflicted her before her arrival caused her death. The sincerity of Mme. de Krüdener in her mysticism and her apostolic labors has not been questioned.

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“Ah! I am greatly pleased,” said he, with an accent of such sincere kindness that I was much moved by it. Then he asked me several questions with reference to their military service and the regiments which they had raised against his troops, with a simplicity and kindness which were really charming, as it showed that he could not entertain resentment. I really believe I should rather have preferred to see Alexander in a rage against my brothers. I should have had at least the courage to defend them, while his indulgence made me find them almost culpable. This conversation was extremely painful to me, and I could scarcely speak.

It was with the same generosity and indignation that the prince rejected all derogatory reports that were made to him on his arrival at Vilna,—reports often false and always malicious, and which, when true, could only distress and irritate his sensitive and generous feelings. He declared he would hear nothing; he had come to pardon.

There was, however, in the act of amnesty one article which caused me great anxiety. It contained a clause that at the end of March, 1813, the time allowed for the return of the Lithuanians, all the property of those who had not returned at that time would be confiscated.

I ventured to express my fears to the emperor. I said that it was possible that my letter had not reached my father at Warsaw, and that he would therefore not be able to enjoy the benefit of the amnesty. The emperor asked me where I supposed my father had gone. I said at random, “To Vienna.” My mother was there at that time. “Very well,”

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said the emperor, "give Tolstoi a letter for him, and we will send it surely this time; for," he added, smiling, "we have always had, during the entire campaign, open communication with Austria. Moreover, you may be quite easy; we shall not use such very rigorous measures. They were announced to prevent money from going out of the country for the support of hostile armies."

This assurance from the lips of his Majesty seemed quite sufficient. The emperor then asked me what were my own plans. I told him I was going to retire to the country. He wanted to know in which direction the estate was situated where I intended to go, and if it was on the route of the soldiers; "for," he said, "my troops are not all angels either, and any of these knaves in the army can commit depredations."

As he showed such kind solicitude, I said, "I fear nothing, sire, since I put myself under your protection." His Majesty seemed pleased with my confidence, and deigned to say that he would seek to justify it, and would give orders to the governor-general to look after my safety.

After a moment's silence, "I have a little favor to ask of you," said the emperor. Somewhat astonished, I raised my eyes. "It is that you will think of me sometimes."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" I replied, "every instant of my life!" We were much moved. Such was the influence of that expansive soul, which attached so much importance to the affection of all who came near him.

As the emperor was about to leave, he rose, and I saw him looking carefully on the floor in every

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direction and in all the corners of the room, without saying what he was looking for. I placed a candle on the carpet and commenced also to search for the lost article, which proved to be the little eye-glass which he constantly used, and which had fallen under the table. To-day I regret not having appropriated it, as it had no value except that of having belonged to Alexander; it was made of plain shell and without ornament.

A very amusing incident occurred that evening. As the emperor arrived, he entered the drawing-room preceded by a large greyhound which sprang around him. Knowing little of his Majesty's sentiments toward dogs, I was surprised that he had brought the greyhound, but I did not show it, and soon forgot all about the presence of the dog.

It was only after the departure of the emperor that I remembered that the animal had not remained in the room, and I asked what had become of it. My servants said that they had taken good care of it, and had fed it with biscuits and milk. After making every inquiry we found that the dog so feasted did not belong to the emperor or even to his coachman Ilia, and I never could ascertain who its master was.

I had the pleasure of seeing Alexander again at the court chapel on Christmas. He left Vilna immediately after mass, almost alone, and without escort. Some one said to Kotousoff that prudence seemed to require the emperor to be better attended in times of war. "*Oh, mon Dieu !*" cried the marshal, "who would have the courage to harm that angel?" And yet it did happen, and one cannot think of it without horror. It did happen, and it was only by

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chance that it failed, — and not in the midst of enemies, not in time of war, but in peace, in his own country, among his ungrateful subjects who deserved the wrath and vengeance of Heaven!

It is easy enough to remember and repeat the interesting conversation of Alexander, and the noble thoughts which fell from his lips; but who could reproduce his expression, his accents, or his countenance? One feels a melancholy regret in the midst of the sweet illusions which delight the heart, in tracing these memories, when one is forced to say to one's self: "This kind and gentle being is no more; nothing can bring him back to us!" Ah! in such moments we can but lift our eyes to heaven to seek his abiding-place.

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## CHAPTER XIV

I ARRIVED at my retreat in the country with my escort of Cossacks; a useless precaution, as the roads were safe and tranquillity was established everywhere. Full of confidence in the last words of the emperor, I felt no anxiety during the month of March. But the managers of my father's estates did not share my security. They said that since I had obtained no order contrary to the general sequestration, the government would act in conformity thereto.

My father not returning, it was necessary to take new measures. I wrote to the emperor, giving the worst reasons in the world for my father's prolonged absence from Russia. I said that if it were necessary I would go myself in search of him, and I ended by begging his Majesty to exempt my father's property from confiscation and sequestration. I sent this letter by an old and faithful equerry to the headquarters, at Johannisberg in Prussia. My courier, though not very nimble, arrived, nevertheless, with all possible speed, and gave my despatch to Count Tolstoi.

My messenger waited three days, during which he constantly besieged the good Count Tolstoi, who, every time he saw him, had him go to his room and told him to have patience, and recommended him to the servants of the court, so that he should not want anything. Finally he was sent back with the most favorable answer, to wit: a passport for me to join

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my father, — of which I made no use, as my request had had the desired result, — and an order to the governor-general not to confiscate our estates.

I hastened to communicate this good news to my father; but I learned soon after that he had left Vienna for Dresden, to join the other members of the provisional government of Lithuania. They had enticed him there by flattering him with vain hopes, in the firm conviction that Napoleon, in the treaty which he was about to conclude at Vienna, would occupy himself definitely with the case of Poland.

With a courage and a perseverance worthy of a better fate, far from their country, deprived, by the voluntary relinquishment of their fortunes, of all means of existence, not receiving any help at all from the French government, the Poles and Lithuanians decided still to follow blindly the tottering fortunes of Napoleon, which, like an expiring flame, still attracted and fascinated with their deceptive glimmer.

Warsaw was occupied by the Russians, but the result of the war was still uncertain. Marshal Kotousoff was attacked by a contagious fever, and his great age and the hardships he had endured during the last campaign rendered all the help of art and medical science useless. Marshal Kotousoff terminated his career at Buntzlau, in Silesia.

Kotousoff had consecrated his life to the service of his sovereigns. At the age of eighteen he received a wound at the taking of a Turkish fort which deprived him of the sight of one of his eyes. He often commanded the Russian armies, gaining several victories, and suffering also many reverses, but

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he always knew how to prevent among his soldiers that discouragement so fatal to armies.

The Russian soldiers vanquished at Austerlitz and at Borodino never despaired of the safety of the empire, and respected their old general even when he was unfortunate. He was a keen and skilful diplomatist, and filled the post of ambassador extraordinary at Constantinople under the reign of the Empress Catherine II. We have seen him negotiate ably with Lauriston, in 1812, in hopes of securing peace, which, however, were not yet to be realized. He improved the opportunity of the armistice by collecting his enormous resources of men, horses, provisions, and munitions of war.

The gratuitous offers of the different Russian provinces were so considerable that I have heard the marshal say that, not only was his army abundantly supplied, but that he was obliged to stop many of the convoys.

I will not dwell on the important events of the German campaign, which, in spite of a few brilliant feats of arms, the last favors of inconstant fortune, prepared the way for the fall of the man who had been the arbiter of the thrones of Europe, and who was about to descend from the throne where his victories and his genius had placed him. These events belong to history and to politics. The pen of the modern Titus Livius, the rival of Richardson and Fielding, has just recorded them with a talent which crowns his literary successes, in the work entitled, *Vie de Napoléon*, etc.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the author refers here to M. Arnault, author of *Vie de Napoléon*.



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The Emperor Alexander distinguished himself in these memorable circumstances, not only by his firmness and his conciliating spirit, but by his personal courage also. Every one knows that at that engagement near Dresden, where the celebrated General Moreau had both legs shot off, the same ball which struck the French general passed so near the Emperor of Russia that it covered him with dust. In one important action, General Wittgenstein sent one of his aides-de-camp to the emperor to beg him to retire and not to expose his life, and to say that his presence deprived him entirely of the coolness necessary for military operations.

Still, the political designs of Alexander were directed solely to the peace of Europe and the independence of Germany. A congress, preceded by an armistice, was held at Prague. The sad result is well known. The hostilities which followed cost humanity rivers of blood, and caused incalculable losses to France. Count Narbonne, then ambassador at Vienna, served the interests of his master very badly there. He brought to the Austrian court customs which were little befitting his age and the rank he held, and which were very displeasing to the gravity of the German character. Narbonne could not discern the real intentions of the Austrian cabinet, or the force of opinion which manifested itself openly in Austria, and which finally compelled its sovereign to declare war against France.

Soon an Austrian army advanced upon the flanks of Napoleon's army, and rendered his position very critical. We shall not here enter into the details of the successes and reverses of the great soldier. At

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the famous battle of Leipzig, where Prince Poniatowski, the last hope of the Poles, perished, one of my cousins, Colonel P., was dangerously wounded and made prisoner by the Prussians. His wife, a very interesting and gifted woman, wrote to the Emperor Alexander, asking permission to join her husband at Berlin, and return with him to Lithuania. The emperor granted her an audience, and received her kindly, and when, emboldened by this success, Madame P. asked that her own personal fortune might be saved from sequestration, the emperor added, "And that of your husband also."

In the same manner he treated his rebel subjects taken with arms in their hands. Unfortunately the people were so accustomed to his magnanimous character that, far from feeling gratitude and admiration, they regarded his generosity as a duty. Such, in general, is the human heart that there are few men for whom gratitude is not a painful duty.

The remark of the Emperor Alexander, "*We shall see which will succeed best, to make one's self feared, or to make one's self loved,*" seemed to be verified each day by the confidence which the chivalrous character of this prince generally inspired, and the union of the German and Russian forces.

At the head of these united forces, and pursuing the remnant of the French army, ready to cross the Rhine, whose banks were covered with his triumphant ensigns, Alexander addressed his brave troops in a proclamation, of which a few passages will not be found out of place here, to show the great soul of the prince and the noble sentiments which governed him: —

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“Soldiers, your valor has conducted you from the banks of the Oka to the borders of the Rhine. . . . In invading our empire, the enemy whom we fight to-day has caused great disaster; but a terrible punishment has fallen on his own head. The vengeance of God has burst upon our enemies. Let us not imitate them, let us forget their deeds. Let us not carry hatred and vengeance into France, but a hand extended in token of peace. The glory of Russia is to conquer the enemy who attacks, and to treat as a brother the enemy who is vanquished. Our revered faith teaches us from the mouth of God to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us. Soldiers, I am convinced that, by the moderation of your conduct in that hostile land which we are about to enter, you will conquer as much by generosity of conduct as by the force of arms, and that, uniting thus the valor of the soldier with the humanity of the Christian, you will put the seal to your great deeds, by preserving the renown which you have acquired of being a brave and enlightened people. I am also persuaded that your chiefs will neglect no means to keep our honor spotless.”

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## CHAPTER XV

IN the mean time, Napoleon had succeeded in extorting new sacrifices from France. He had once more struck his foot upon the earth, and from it had arisen this time, not men, but children, who hardly knew how to use the weapons which were put into their hands. Yet the French army, whose valor was sustained by a remnant of the old troops accustomed to warfare, proved by its skilful manœuvres the great military genius of him by whom it was led.

The allied generals, not being able to maintain themselves longer in a ruined country, thought at one time that retreat was inevitable. At Paris, the National Guard took a warlike attitude, which it will not be denied might have caused the ruin of that capital, if Marie Louise had displayed, in these circumstances, the grand character of Maria Theresa.

Alexander, far from approving the plan of the allies, induced them to adopt his own, which was, to march rapidly upon Paris, while a corps of the army held Napoleon in check; and this was, even in the opinion of the commanding-generals, a stroke of true military genius, to which one must attribute the happy and brilliant result of the campaign.

While Napoleon persisted in fighting the Russian General Wintzingerode,<sup>1</sup> the Emperor Alexander ad-

<sup>1</sup> Baron Ferdinand von Wintzingerode (born 1770, died 1818) a German officer who entered the Russian army and served in the

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vanced upon Paris at the head of an army whose strength was so considerable that Marshal Marmont did not dare to oppose him and to risk exposing, in the defence of Paris, the population of that city to the horrors of pillage. This capitulation, with which the marshal has been reproached, and which has been regarded as the work of treason by Napoleon and his partisans, was inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

Paris saw with terror upon the heights of Montmartre the immense army ready to plunge itself into her bosom. Marie Louise and her son having left Paris, the Parisians, who were no longer sustained by any great patriotic impulse, thought only of their own safety, and saw France and their country only within the boundaries of Paris. Fearing just reprisals and not knowing yet the extent of the generosity of Alexander's character, the greater part of the inhabitants hastened to flee, and to get rid of all that they possessed at ridiculously small prices.

The choicest libraries, rich galleries of pictures, a thousand objects of art and *vertu* were exposed in the shops of the dealers, who, trembling for the treasures which a moment could rob them of, hastened to put them out of sight. Anxiety and consternation reigned in that immense city, which was still ignorant of the fate which the justice or the clemency of the allied sovereigns had reserved for them. The

campaigns of 1809 and 1812, and greatly distinguished himself in the battles of Leipsic, Lutzen, and Saint Dizier. In 1812 he was made general of cavalry by Alexander.

<sup>1</sup> The author is mistaken here. It is not in the capitulation of Paris that Napoleon and his partisans have seen a reprehensible deed, but in abandoning their position at Essones, after the capitulation of Paris.

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partisans of the Bourbons alone, filled with confidence in the generous character of the august confederation, were filled with hope and wore publicly the white cockade, as a sign of rallying for the good cause.

On the thirtieth of March, the day memorable for Marshal Marmont's capitulation, the aldermen of the City of Paris repaired to the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia, and were admitted to an audience with the prince, who addressed them in the following kind words: —

“It is not against France that we are making war, but against the man who, calling himself our friend, our ally, has betrayed us three times; who has come to attack and ravage our dominions, and has left there traces of his passage which time only can efface. I love the French, and I recognize as enemy among them only Napoleon. Paris can count on my protection. Only the picked of our troops shall enter within the walls of this city.

“I will return good for evil. France needs a stable government which can assure her own repose and that of Europe.”

Delighted with their reception, the aldermen carried back to Paris the kind and pacific words of the conqueror and friend of the French. Finally, the presence of Alexander succeeded in restoring confidence. On the thirty-first of March the allied troops entered Paris. Several squadrons of cavalry led the march; then Alexander advanced, accompanied by the King of Prussia, followed by the Grand Duke Constantine, the Prince of Schwarzenburg,<sup>1</sup> and a

<sup>1</sup> Karl Philipp, Prince von Schwarzenburg (born 1775, died 1815). He entered the Russian army at an early age and served against

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brilliant staff. Then marched, in the finest military order, a long column composed of the picked infantry, cavalry, and artillery of the Imperial Guards.

Favored with superb weather, this brilliant cortège defiled through the faubourg Saint-Martin, the Boulevard, the Place Louis XV., and stopped at the Champs-Élysées, greeted by the cries of "*Vive Alexandre !*" "*Vive le roi de Prussie !*" "*Vivent les Bourbons !*"

Alexander entered Paris as conqueror, at the head of his triumphant armies ; and yet, to judge from the eagerness of the people, who assembled in crowds upon his route to see and admire the majestic grace and the gentle and benevolent countenance of this hero of humanity, one would have said he was a beloved monarch, re-entering his own capital upon his return from a fortunate and glorious campaign, and receiving the homage of his subjects.

What a moment! what a triumph! An instant of intoxication might have been pardonable in these circumstances, but Alexander's heart, inaccessible to pride, gave all this glory to Him from whom all glory proceeds, blessing Providence for having guided his footsteps.

the Turks in 1789, and through the earlier campaigns of the war of the French Revolution. In 1809 he fought brilliantly at Wagram. He conducted the negotiations which preceded the marriage of Napoleon to Marie Louise. In 1812 he commanded the Austrian detachment sent to aid Napoleon in the Russian campaign, and took care not to render him very efficient assistance. He saved the Prussians from absolute defeat on the first day of the battle of Leipsic. After Blücher's victory at Laon he met Napoleon at Arcis-sur-Aube, March 20, 1814, and then fought a drawn battle which practically brought the campaign to an end. In 1815 he was marching to the rescue of the Prussians and English at the head of the Russians and Austrians, when he heard of Waterloo.

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On the day of his entry to Paris, Alexander published the following proclamation:—

The armies of the allied Powers have occupied the capital of France. The allied sovereigns respect the wishes of the French nation. They declare that if the conditions of peace are to have the strongest guarantees the ambition of Bonaparte must be curbed; and the prospect for a lasting peace will be most hopeful when, by a return to a wise government, France herself offers the assurance of that peace. The sovereigns proclaim, therefore, that they will not treat with Napoleon Bonaparte or with any member of his family; that they respect the integrity of ancient France, such as she was under the legitimate kings. They can do even more, as they always profess the principle that, for the welfare of Europe, France must be great and strong, and they will recognize and guarantee that constitution which France shall adopt. They invite the senate, therefore, to form a provisional government which shall provide for the needs of the administration and prepare a constitution which will be agreeable to the French people. The intentions which I have just expressed are shared by the other Powers.

ALEXANDER.

NESSELRODE.

PARIS, March 31, 3 o'clock P. M.

The senate, which until recently had always been passive and pliant under the despotic will of Napoleon, at last shook off the yoke that oppressed it, declared Napoleon and his family dethroned, and absolved the nation from the oath of allegiance. The Emperor Alexander gave audience to a deputation from the senate. "Sire, we have been waiting a long time for your Majesty," said one of the mem-



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bers of the deputation. Nothing could have been happier than Alexander's reply: "You owe this delay only to French valor."

Alexander repeated that he was a friend of the French; that justice as well as reason demanded of France that she should choose a constitution conformable to the lights of the century; that he as well as the other allied sovereigns assured his protection to the wise and just views of the French nation.

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## CHAPTER XVI

AS the combined troops entered Paris, fifteen hundred men of the French army, who had been made prisoners in the environs of that city, waited on the boulevard till their fate, or rather their destination, should be decided, when Russian officers arrived in haste, crying to them: "Frenchmen, you are free! The Emperor Alexander gives you liberty in the name of your king, Louis XVIII. You can return to your homes." This was a very noble and delicate manner of insinuating to the French nation the choice which it had already pronounced without doubt in the depths of its own heart, after the fall of Napoleon. The French soldiers cried at once, *Vive le roi!* and asked for the white cockade. Then ladies of the highest distinction brought a white flag, upon which the soldiers swore the oath of allegiance to Louis XVIII.

As Alexander crossed the Place Vendôme, his attention was suddenly attracted by the beautiful monument erected to pride, victory, and power united in the person of Napoleon — of that monarch so dreaded, of that conqueror so haughty, who, through the vicissitudes of human affairs, was signing the act which was to pluck from him grandeur and supreme power — in a word, his abdication — at the very moment perhaps when his successful and modest rival was contemplating his pompous effigy. Addressing some persons who stood near, Alexander said, smil-

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ing: "If I had attained such a height, *my* head would have been turned."

The mob, which is always ready to overthrow the idols which yesterday it worshipped, having manifested a desire to demolish the statue of Napoleon, the police published an order declaring that his Majesty the Emperor of Russia had taken this *chef-d'œuvre* under his protection, and that it should be immediately replaced by the statue of Peace. He forbade insulting or outraging the members of the old government by any writings whatever. The magnanimity of the Emperor Alexander forgot nothing.

It is said that when the chief of the coalition, upon his entry into Paris, declared to the deputation of the senate, in the name of the allied sovereigns, that they did not wish to influence the French nation in the choice of their sovereign, this choice, dictated by admiration as well as by confidence, would have proclaimed the name of Alexander, if the natural equity of his character had permitted him to accept that splendid token of respect. The interest and consideration which Alexander showed to Josephine, Napoleon's first wife, and to Prince Eugène, her son, are well known.

Alexander stopped in Paris at the house of Prince Talleyrand. This was a proof of confidence which he believed he owed to the devotion and zeal which this man had shown for the cause of the Bourbons.

Charmed by the graciousness, the intelligence, and the affability of Alexander, the French believed they had found their Henri IV. in this sovereign of the North; and new songs, which fashion soon made national, celebrated these two august names together.

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The French daily besieged the doors of Talleyrand's house. They came to converse with Alexander, not only upon the great interests of France, but upon their own personal affairs, calling upon the justice of this prince to settle even their family differences. Alexander, always accessible, smiled at these remarkable proofs of confidence, and no importunity could ever weary or exhaust the kindness of this sovereign.

At last, Count Nesselrode, the minister of the Emperor of Russia, found himself obliged to publish a note, in which he declared, in the name of his sovereign, that his Imperial Majesty, during his stay in Paris, having to look after the interests of Europe, could not undertake to exercise any influence over the affairs of private individuals in reference to the law, or to the policy of the government, and therefore he asked them to apply in such circumstances to the authorities of the country.

Alexander also insisted with the allied sovereigns upon the most advantageous terms and conditions for the enemy, whose glory and misfortunes he could not help considering. He wished that Napoleon might retain the title of emperor, with which he had been invested, which the church had sanctioned, and which all the powers of Europe (with the exception of England) had recognized; finally, that he should enjoy his liberty, the sovereignty of the island of Elba, and all his riches. Alexander's generosity could not calculate or foresee the results and dangers of such liberality.

The good order and discipline established among the allied troops inspired the Parisians with such con-

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fidence that the same day that the armies entered Paris all the shops were opened, and among an infinite number of curiosities, services of porcelain were displayed, representing the entrance of the allied sovereigns into Paris. This would lead one to suppose that the artists, as able politicians, had foreseen this event.

Military discipline was so rigorously observed in the Russian army that a soldier was punished by death for having stolen a loaf of bread from a baker's shop, in entering Paris, though no doubt pressed by hunger. The officer who surprised him in the act blew his brains out on the spot. The Russian troops gave also a remarkable example of orderliness on that day. The Emperor Alexander was at the theatre. Some one came to inform him that the Imperial Guards, encamped at the Champs-Élysées had not yet received their rations, and that the soldiers were beginning to complain. The emperor left his box at once, sent for the French authorities, and made them feel that he would not be responsible for disorders if they left his soldiers in want of provisions. Immediately all the cabs of Paris were put into requisition to carry food of every kind to the Champs-Élysées.

Though now victorious in France, and suffering from fatigue and hunger, these Russian soldiers, who had seen their own country ravaged by the French, had passed the entire day without committing the least excess. What men! what an army! and how great was the prince who had made of his soldiers men fit to conquer the world if he would!

The Polish troops, who had been until then in the service of France and Napoleon, now desired to

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re-enter the service of Alexander, in whom they placed all the hopes for which these brave soldiers had so long and so vainly shed their blood. The emperor received their homage with satisfaction, gave them his own brother for their leader, as guaranty of his protection and of the promises which he made them relating to the future fate of their country.

It is a thing worthy of observation that it was the Emperor of Russia who obliged the French government to pay his Lithuanian subjects drawn into the service of Napoleon the arrears of their military pay. He gave audience to a great many of them, spoke to them kindly, and permitted them to return to their own homes, but would not consent to receive the members of the provisional government of Lithuania, saying that he had never heard of such a government in his dominions.

My father, on his return from Paris, related to me that the secretary of this government had composed a letter which was to be signed by all the members, which was a species of compact or treaty between them and their sovereign. With singular inconsistency, said my father, — who declared that he would never sign such a letter, and dictated another more befitting the circumstances, — they had ended this with the ordinary formula, “very humble, very obedient, very faithful subjects,” etc.

The emperor permitted all these gentlemen to return to Lithuania and to take possession of their property.

The Emperor Alexander, in visiting all the masterpieces and other interesting objects which decorate and adorn Paris, lost no time in seeing that which

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immortalizes the memory of Louis XIV., and which in my opinion proves best the grandeur and truly royal, benevolent, and serviceable munificence of that great king. I speak of the Hôtel des Invalides. It was the second time that a Russian sovereign had been seen there. The emperor found these old children of victory deeply afflicted. The trophies of their glory, the cannon taken at Jena, Austerlitz, and Wagram, had just been carried away.

"Be consoled, my brave fellows," said the prince to them, whose heart always vibrated to noble emotions; "I will intercede with the sovereigns, my allies, that they may leave you some of your glorious souvenirs." In quitting them he ordered that twelve Russian cannon should be left at the Invalides. Everywhere, on all occasions he showed the same nobility of feeling.

The French offered to change the name of the bridge of Austerlitz. "No," said the emperor, "it is enough that it is known that the Emperor of Russia has passed over it with his armies."

In the audience accorded to the French Institute, Alexander responded to the speech of M. Lacretelle<sup>1</sup> thus: that he was always glad to do justice to the progress of the French in science and art, that he was far from attributing the misfortunes of France to her learned men, and that he rejoiced with them that they had regained their liberty of thought. "My happiness," continued Alexander, "and my one desire is to be able to be useful to the human race."

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Louis de Lacretelle (born 1751, died 1824), a distinguished French lawyer, and a successful author. He was admitted to the French Academy in the place of De La Harpe about 1802.

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The emperor and the King of Prussia honored the Institute by their presence at one of its public sittings, and listened to a eulogy on Peter the Great and one on Frederic the Great, in which the president adroitly mingled the praises of their august successors. His Majesty afterwards entered into conversation with several members of the Institute, and with M. Villemain, who did not yet belong to that illustrious body, but who was already admired for his youthful and brilliant talents.

The emperor received also a deputation from the society for the encouragement of useful arts and trades, at the head of which was M. Chaptal. He thanked his Majesty for the protection which he had accorded to the industries of the city on his entry into Paris. The emperor responded: "M. Chaptal, I desire greatly that the useful arts and trades may be extended over the whole world, and I esteem exceedingly all those who endeavor to bring about that noble end."

It was with an enthusiasm filled with real interest, much more than with a sentiment of curiosity that Alexander visited all those places in Paris consecrated to science, the fine arts, industries, and humanity. Everywhere his presence, his affability, and his addresses excited astonishment mingled with admiration, and inspired the tenderest veneration for his person.

The learned men of all classes and the most distinguished men of letters could but admire that fine and delicate perception, and that clear judgment which shone in each response of the prince, and wondered at the noble, elegant, and natural eloquence



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with which the Russian sovereign expressed himself in a style which was for themselves a constant study.

When Alexander visited the Mint, a medal was struck off in his presence, which bore on one side the first letter of his name, *A.*, with this inscription around it: *To the restorer of peace in Europe*; on the reverse, the arms of France with these words: *In the month of April, 1814, France joined the grand confederation of the Powers of Europe.*

The emperor also honored the institution of Écouen with his presence. In passing through the apartments of the Louvre and the Tuileries he paused a moment in the salon called *de la Paix*, saying to those who followed him, "What use could Napoleon find for this room?"

On the day of the entry into Paris, the good Bishop of Troyes, Abbot of Boulogne, was, by order of the emperor, delivered from the imprisonment into which the irascible pride of Napoleon had thrown him, because that worthy prelate had said in his presence that no menace could intimidate him.

Alexander invited the director of the institute for the deaf and dumb to dine with him, the Abbé Sicard, who had been previously decorated by that prince with the cross of St. Vladimir, which Napoleon had forbidden him to wear.

Alexander loved to acknowledge and reward merit in all classes of society. To the widow of his old instructor La Harpe he showed many tokens of kindness; and in a visit which he made to that lady, he spoke with pleasure of the gratitude he felt for the careful training of him whose loss he still mourned.

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Proud of the protection extended to them by Alexander, the French artists hastened to reproduce the noble features of the author of peace, and soon a bust of him appeared with this inscription : —

“ALEXANDRO RUSSIARUM OMNIUM IMPERATORI  
MEMORES GALLIARUM POPULI.

Jura pater populo, diademata regibus ultor,  
Europeæ pacem, templis sua numina reddit.”

Wishing to show to the Poles who were in Paris the interest he felt for them, Alexander induced the Princess Jablonowska to give a ball in order to bring them all together in his presence. In that assembly, where there were to be found many Lithuanian emigrants, Alexander displayed all the graces he possessed, wishing to prove by his generous conduct that *to love and to pardon* was his motto. “The happiness of the human race is my happiness,” he said.

*Monsieur* (le Comte d'Artois), or as the emperor gracefully called him, “*un Français de plus*,” had already arrived in Paris, where his presence produced the liveliest excitement; and the Emperor Alexander wished to give in that city a grand example of the gratitude which one owes for the support and protection of Providence. Upon the Place Louis XV., a place ever memorable in the bloody pages of the history of the French revolution, a grand celebration was prepared by order of Alexander; seven priests of the Greek church, assisted by the singers of the imperial chapel, celebrated the divine office with all

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the pomp appropriate to such a grand ceremony, and before the richly decorated altar the troops marched on their return from a brilliant review. An immense throng assembled to witness this spectacle whose novelty excited the curiosity of the Parisians. As the sovereigns ascended to the altar a *Te Deum* was sung and incense perfumed the air, and the princes as well as their soldiers bent the knee to receive the divine benediction and to humble themselves before Him who rules over kings.

As soon as Louis XVIII. had returned to France, and to the throne of his ancestors, Alexander hastened to go to him in Compiègne. He arrived without retinue, accompanied only by his aide-de-camp, Czernischeff. The Prince de Condé<sup>1</sup> received his Imperial Majesty at the top of the staircase, and conducted him into a salon where the King of France awaited him. The meeting of the two monarchs was as touching as affectionate. The conversation which followed was the overflowing of two noble hearts. At the request of the King of France, Alexander at once granted liberty to one hundred and fifty thousand French prisoners of war in Russia.

"No matter," said Louis XVIII., "under what flag they have fought! They are unfortunate, and we must regard them as our children!"

At the entry of the king into the capital of his kingdom, the sovereign allies dined at the Tuileries,

<sup>1</sup> Louis Joseph de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (born 1736, died 1818). At the Restoration he returned to France, and Louis XVIII. appointed him colonel-general of infantry and master of the royal household. On the occasion of Alexander's visit to the king the Prince de Condé was attended by his son, the Duc de Bourbon, who was the last of the distinguished race of the Condés.

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and the king, probably in conformity with some ancient rule of etiquette at the court of France, passed first into the banqueting-hall. The Emperor Alexander, a little surprised, said, smiling, to some persons near him, "We barbarians of the North are more polite when we are at home."

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## CHAPTER XVII

AFTER having guaranteed the tranquillity and independence of the French people, and the integrity of the boundaries of their territory, by a treaty of peace more advantageous to France than she had dared to expect after her reverses, the allied sovereigns quitted Paris and France to go to England.

Alexander and the King of Prussia embarked at Boulogne, where a fleet awaited them commanded by the grand admiral, the Duke of Clarence. Their rapid passage was made amid the sound of salutes fired by the English and Russian fleets, and an immense throng of people covered the shores of England to witness the landing of the two sovereigns.

The princes mounted the carriages destined for them, and the people, by a spontaneous movement, to which all resistance would have been useless, detached the horses and drew the carriages as far as Dover, amidst the wildest acclamations and cries of "Long live the Emperor Alexander!" "Long live the King of Prussia!"

On the morrow the two monarchs, to evade the energetic demonstrations of the English people, and, to use an English expression, "greatly to their disappointment," left incognito in post-carriages. They arrived without accident and without demonstration in London. The Emperor of Russia stopped at the house occupied by her Highness the Imperial

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Grand Duchess Catherine, his sister, who had preceded him to England. To satisfy the demands of the crowd assembled, eager to see the features of the restorer of peace in Europe, and of a conqueror endowed with the love of humanity and greatness of soul, Alexander, upon his arrival, was obliged to show himself upon the balcony and to receive the homage of the sons of Albion.

In the streets where the cortège of the sovereigns was to pass, the roofs of the houses were removed to make places for the curious. Even before the house which the emperor occupied seats and platforms were erected where ladies came with tickets to see the Emperor Alexander on his passage to and from his house.

The emperor gave audience, in his rooms of ceremony at St. James Palace, to the lord-mayor of London, accompanied by the principal aldermen in grand costume.

“Will you allow us,” said the lord-mayor, “to show your Imperial Majesty how we feel ourselves honored to-day, when Great Britain has the happiness to receive a monarch so great by the high rank which he fills, and greater still by the qualities of his heart, which is noble, generous, good, and just?”

Alexander responded in English: “Receive my thanks, gentlemen, for the very flattering address which you have just made me. I have for a long time wished to see England, and now I find myself here with so much the more satisfaction since, after this memorable war, Europe has gained a peace which I hope will conduce to the happiness of the human race. Say to your compatriots from me that

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the English nation has every right to my esteem. Her conduct in this last and painful struggle has excited my admiration, and that of the whole world. During the war I have always shown myself a faithful ally of Great Britain, and in peace I will be her constant friend."

I will not undertake to describe the brilliant festivities for which they had been for a long time preparing in England: balls where there were three thousand guests; sumptuous dinners given by the city of London with numerous toasts, always accompanied by the beloved refrain, "God save the king," or "Rule Britannia." There were spectacles and naval festivals at Woolwich and at Portsmouth, and nothing was wanting in the succession of rejoicings and celebrations.

The Emperor Alexander visited with interest the environs of London as well as the public establishments of that great city; among others the Bank of England, to which he gave particular attention, saying that all he had observed confirmed him in the opinion that England, by the extent of her commercial relations, her enormous wealth, and the estimable character of her people, was well worthy of the renown which she enjoyed.

Alexander went also, with his sister the Grand Duchess Catherine, to Oxford, where he visited most carefully the famous university; and he, as well as the King of Prussia, accepted the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. This ceremony took place with great pomp in the presence of a great number of spectators of both sexes, the students in the black gown. The prince regent, in cap and gown, having already been

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promoted to the dignity of doctor, received the two august candidates in the great reunion hall. The orator of the university delivered an oration in Latin filled with eulogies of the two monarchs; then several students declaimed pieces of poetry on the burning of Moscow, the fall of Napoleon, the constancy and magnanimity of the allies, the wisdom of the prince regent, etc., etc.

The emperor honored Blenheim with his presence, and the Countess of Jersey<sup>1</sup> gave a magnificent ball in his honor. He visited Richmond, Greenwich, Chelsea, and other public places.

After a sojourn of nearly four weeks, which passed like enchantment in the midst of all this magical display of wealth and power, Alexander quitted England for Holland, where he made a pilgrimage to the house in which Peter the Great had lived at Saardam.

He then joined the Empress Elizabeth at Brussels. After an absence of one year and after a war ever glorious and memorable, Russia was to see her sovereign once more. The letter from this prince to Wiazmintoff, Commander-in-chief at St. Petersburg, is an example of that spirit of modesty and piety which distinguished the Emperor Alexander:

“Being informed of the preparations which are being made for our reception upon our return, and having always felt a repugnance for that kind of homage, I consider

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Sophia, eldest child of John, tenth Earl of Westmoreland, succeeded by bequest to the immense fortune of her maternal grandfather. In 1804 she married George, the fifth Earl of Jersey. He was twice Lord Chamberlain to William IV., and twice Master of the Horse to Queen Victoria.



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it to-day more superfluous than ever. The All Powerful alone has brought about the great events which have put an end to a bloody war in Russia. Therefore make my irrevocable will known, to stop all kinds of shows and ceremonials relative to our return into our states. Send orders to the governors of the provinces that they must upon no pretext whatever leave the capitals of their governments. I hold you responsible for the execution of this order."

In returning to St. Petersburg the emperor travelled rapidly through Lithuania, not stopping at Vilna. I record a few anecdotes which will show that prosperity, success, and glory had not changed his amiable character.

Travelling as usual without retinue, or else separated from them, the emperor stopped at a country church to hear a mass; when it was finished he approached the priest to kiss his hand, a mark of respect which is always accorded to ministers of our religion. The vicar, not knowing the emperor (I have the story from the emperor himself), kissed his forehead. In leaving the church, which was empty, he perceived only one woman, who was waiting for her carriage. He bowed, asking her where she was going. She answered, "to Vilkomir." It was the town where his Majesty was to change horses. As the lady's carriage did not arrive, the emperor proposed that she should get into his chaise. Thinking that he was a simple Russian officer, she consented gladly and explained to the emperor that she was obliged to go to Vilkomir to attend a lawsuit, which she feared she would lose although her case was just; "for," added she, "what justice can a poor widow without protec-

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tion expect ? ” She had been advised, she said, to apply to the governor-general of Lithuania, but she had not the honor of his acquaintance, and had no means of attracting the interest of the secretary of the government.

The conversation amused the emperor extremely, and he hastened to offer his influence for the lady with M. Korsakoff. The poor widow thanked him for his kindness, but did not seem to attach much importance to the offers of the services of an officer of low rank.

Finally they arrived at Vilkomir. What was the surprise of the followers of the emperor to see him arrive seated at the side of a woman who was neither young, pretty, nor in any way distinguished in her appearance. But nothing could equal the confusion and astonishment of the poor woman, when she saw by the signs of respect which were shown to her travelling companion, that she had been so long with the emperor, her sovereign. The most fortunate part of this meeting for her was that she gained her suit, thanks to the influence in which, at first, she had had so little confidence.

The emperor liked very much to travel incognito. He often entered private houses which he found on the way, chatted with the inmates, attracted their confidence by his agreeable manner, asked questions, and discovered by this means many abuses of power which were hidden from him, and which were injurious to the welfare of his subjects.

One day he entered in this way the house of a country gentleman, a very good man, who received him cordially, and who, charmed by the

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friendly manner with which his guest responded to his hospitality in taking the beer which he offered, exclaimed: —

“If all your comrades only resembled you! Unfortunately the greater part of them, especially the officers of the guards, are hard and insolent and make us fear the passage of the troops through the country like the plague. And now, my dear friend,” he said, becoming more and more friendly with each glass of beer which he drank, “tell me, I beg of you, your name, that I may know whom I have the honor to receive under my roof.”

The emperor, a little embarrassed, answered that he was called an *honest man*. “Very well, my dear *honest man*,” replied the gentleman, embracing the emperor heartily, “the blessings of Heaven be with you!” Just then several persons of the imperial retinue arrived; the incognito was discovered and the gentleman trembling and confused fell at the feet of the emperor, who raised him kindly, and at parting left a token of remembrance.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

**I**F the modesty of Alexander led him to suppress the pomp of public homage at the time of his return to the capital of his empire, it could not suppress the sentiments of love and admiration which his presence inspired.

What a moment was that for the heart of a mother, when the Empress Marie held in her arms a son so worthy of her for his virtues, so worthy for his wisdom; this prince, the honor and glory of Russia, the peacemaker of Europe! He alone, by the influence of his character, guided and inspired by religion, had destroyed the works of a mighty genius, and had robbed Napoleon of the glorious fruit of twenty years' labor and many victories. After vain and unsuccessful attempts to resist him, the sovereigns of Europe had finally submitted to the fatal charm exerted over them by him whom they regarded as the scourge of God, against which there was no protection. But Alexander came and said, "He is not invincible; let us put our confidence in Providence."

Satisfied with having established the position of Russia, and with having made known the noble character of the people whom he governed; not attributing any of the successes to himself; showing as much moderation in prosperity as he had shown steadfastness in adversity, Alexander not only succeeded in winning the admiration of the allied sovereigns, but he knew how to inspire their sincere affection, and

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for the rest of his life he remained their counsellor and friend.

The blessing of the Almighty alone could have accomplished the great deeds which Alexander had directed, and the synod, the Council of State, and the Senate, wished to immortalize the great events of the Russian nation and the glory of their sovereign. They sent, therefore, a deputation, composed of Prince Kourakine,<sup>1</sup> privy councillor, General Tormasoff, and Count Sottikoff, to offer his Imperial Majesty the surname of the Blessed, — a glorious title without doubt, but one which it seemed could not wound the modesty of the emperor, since it indicated that all the great things which he had accomplished were ratified by the seal of Providence. The deputation begged his Majesty in the name of the State to consent to their raising a monument in St. Petersburg to immortalize such glorious memories, with this inscription: "*To Alexander the Blessed, Emperor of all the Russias, magnanimous restorer of the Powers of Europe. Grateful Russia.*"

The emperor received the deputation with his accustomed graciousness, and replied to the address which they made him as follows: "In receiving the petition of the Sacred Synod, the Council of State, and the Senate, to raise a monument to our memory in the capital of our empire, offering us the surname of the Blessed, I have felt, to the depths of my heart the most lively satisfaction, recognizing on the one hand the blessings of Providence, and on the other

<sup>1</sup> Prince Alexandre Kourakine (born 1752, died 1818) was a favorite courtier of Paul I. and was greatly esteemed by Alexander. From 1808 to 1812 he was Russian ambassador to Paris.

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the sentiments of the united empire. They offer me a title which seems to me the more flattering as all my thoughts, all the desires of my soul, all my prayers are for the benediction of the Most High upon the people whom he has confided to me, and that I may be a blessing to my faithful subjects. .

“ But in desiring to attain this end, I cannot flatter myself that I have attained it; I cannot allow myself to accept and bear this name, for by so doing I should give my subjects an example contrary to the sentiments of moderation and to the spirit of humility which I endeavor to inspire in them. Therefore, in showing them my gratitude I ask the departments of State to regard this thing as not having been proposed. Elevate for me a monument in your hearts like the one I bear in my heart for you! As my people bless me, so I bless them! May Russia be happy, and may the blessing of God be with her and with me! ”

Alexander did not seek repose from the labors of the long campaign except in untiring and constant application to his duties as ruler, and in mitigating the ills which his empire had undergone in consequence of the war. Forced to quit the country once more to attend the Congress of Vienna, he hastened to bring to these evils the promptest and most efficacious remedies. He commenced by ordering assemblies to be held in all parts of the empire to return thanks to Providence for the safety of Russia. He instituted a cross of honor for the clergy with the date 1812. The army received a medal with the date of its entrance to Paris. He ordered also a medal with the ribbon of St. Vladimir for the Russian nobil-

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ity who had distinguished themselves by so many heroic sacrifices for the country, and he gave to the heads of families the honor of wearing this badge of distinction. The commercial class obtained also a recognition of its services, — a medal with the ribbon of St. Anne.

His Majesty remitted all arrearages of taxes throughout the whole empire, from the year 1813, also all fines, expenses, and penalties accruing therefrom. He granted pardon to all prisoners not guilty of murder or robbery. Finally, he extended his clemency to all those who, from various motives, had allowed themselves, against their natural inclinations, to be led over to the side of the enemy. At the same time he ordered repayment to be made to those provinces of the empire which had made considerable advances to the government during the war.

The emperor addressed a letter to the committee for the education of the clergy, which closed with the following religious sentiments: —

“In confirming all that has been presented to me by this commission, I think it necessary to express my opinion in regard to the education of young ecclesiastics. Education is, properly speaking, only the extension of enlightenment. It ought, therefore, to seek to extend and spread that light which lightens the darkness and which the darkness has not known. The pupils should be directed to the real sources of good, by those means which the Evangelist has taught us with so much simplicity and wisdom in these words, *‘Jesus is the way, the truth, and the light.’* The spirit of Christianity is therefore, and ought to be, the foundation of Christian and public instruction, particularly that which concerns young men destined for the church,

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since it serves to guard them from error, by submitting themselves to the Divine wisdom. I am persuaded that the commission, by imploring the help of the Saviour, will direct all their efforts toward that end without which no one can look for the real fruit of his labors."



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## CHAPTER XIX

IN passing through Poland on his way to Vienna, the emperor was pleased to admit into his presence a deputation of Poles from Warsaw, whose chief, Senator Kicki addressed his Majesty, expressing in the name of his compatriots their sentiments of gratitude and devotion, as well as their unlimited confidence in the generous protection of Alexander. The emperor replied in terms flattering to the Poles. He said he was going to Vienna to accomplish a great work which he had undertaken in their favor. "I hope," added the emperor, "that its success will justify the confidence of your nation; the happiness of Poland will be my reward."

The emperor passed by Pulhawy, a château of the princes Czartoryski, which several years previously had had the honor of receiving his Majesty. The sojourn of about a fortnight at that time had left ineffaceable remembrances in the minds of his noble hosts, loaded as they were with marks of an august friendship.

Beside the numerous family of Princess Czartoryska,<sup>1</sup> composed of her two sons, the Princess of Wür-

<sup>1</sup> Princess Isabella Fortunée Czartoryska (born 1743, died 1835) was the daughter of Count Fleming of Saxony. She married the Polish statesman, Prince Adam Casimir Czartoryski. Her beauty and mental endowments gained her celebrity and much political influence. Prince Czartoryski had joined Napoleon's invading army, and had been appointed field-marshal of the Polish Diet; he therefore thought it wise not to obtrude himself on the Emperor Alexander.

Marie Czartoryska, the daughter of the preceding, was married

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temberg, and the Countess Zamoyska, her daughters, a great number of people of distinction, among others my Aunt Radzivil, her son the Prince Antoine, Countess Rzewuska, General Krasinski, Senator Novosiltzoff,<sup>1</sup> vice-president of the council, and a new deputation from Warsaw, were assembled at Pulhawy to enjoy the pleasure of seeing Alexander, and of offering their homage. The kindness of the emperor, which made itself felt in the slightest words which he spoke, and which came from a heart which neither power nor prosperity could change, — this kindness inspired enthusiasm, gratitude, devotion, and confidence. Alexander said to the Polish deputies, “Assure the people of Warsaw of my solicitude for them; and if I delay my arrival at Warsaw, it will only be to consolidate their fortune.”

At the moment of his Majesty's departure, and after having received his adieux, Princess Czartoryska, her children, and the whole company preceded the emperor to the boat in which he and his suite were to cross the Vistula, a short distance from the château. The emperor seemed agreeably surprised by this zeal which had no other end than to enjoy his presence a few moments longer, and he acknowledged it with his accustomed grace. By an excess of gallantry, in spite of the coolness of the evening augmented by that of the water, the emperor would not keep on his cloak in the presence of the ladies.

October 27, 1784, to Prince Louis of Würtemberg. When he declined to fight against Russia in behalf of Poland, he lost his command in the Polish army, and his wife refused to live with him.

<sup>1</sup> Baron Nicholas de Novosiltzoff, a Russian diplomat who enjoyed the favor of Emperor Alexander, and was sent by him on several important missions to Germany and England. He died in 1838.

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Encouraged by the amiable remarks which he addressed them, Princess Czartoryska, and other ladies begged to be allowed to take a few feathers from his plume. Apparently amused by this demand, he instantly hastened to satisfy their wish.

The sovereigns of Europe having agreed to meet at Vienna, either in person or through their ministers, to discuss the rights and interests of the nations, the question of the order of precedence was immediately agitated. With his usual modesty, far from demanding the pre-eminence which was due him, wishing on the contrary to avoid all discussion capable of causing ill feeling, Alexander proposed that the council should be admitted alphabetically, which would place him far from the first place; always magnanimous in council and where important interests were at stake, Alexander was the amiable prince, the agreeable man in all the reunions where he appeared.

His august sisters, the Grand Duchess Catherine, afterwards the Queen of Würtemberg, and the Grand Duchess of Weimar were also at Vienna. It was especially in their society that the etiquette of the sovereign disappeared, and gave place to amiable pleasantries.

There was a great resemblance between the Grand Duchess Catherine and the emperor, and to make it more striking Alexander conceived the idea, one evening, of dressing himself in the clothes and the coiffure of her Imperial Highness.

On the birthday of the Emperor of Austria, Alexander and the King of Prussia proposed to surprise him on rising in the morning, and to present him, the one a superb dressing-gown of sable, the other a

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silver basin and jug of beautiful Berlin workmanship. One often met the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia walking together in the streets of Vienna in citizen's dress.

The reunion of the men most illustrious and most distinguished by rank, talent, and genius whom Europe possessed, was celebrated by brilliant and ingenious festivities, allegorical tableaux in which the most beautiful women of the court took part, operas, amateur plays, balls, and tournaments. "In fine," said the Prince of Ligne,<sup>1</sup> "nothing was wanting but the funeral procession of a certain *marshal of the empire*."

The Poles awaited with patience the result of the conferences of the Congress and the fulfilment of Alexander's promises. In spite of numberless obstacles and hindrances raised by the council of Vienna against the just and liberal views of Alexander, he was declared King of Poland. He announced the news himself in a letter written by his own hand to Count Ostrowski,<sup>2</sup> the president of the senate.

"It is with great satisfaction that I announce to you," he said, "that the fate of your country is at last decided by the

<sup>1</sup> Prince Charles Joseph Ligne (born 1735, died 1814), an able Austrian general and witty writer. He served with distinction in the Seven Years' War and was made a major-general in 1765. In 1782 he was Ambassador to Russia, and was highly favored by Catherine II. He obtained the rank of field-marshal in 1808. His generous and chivalrous character rendered him the idol of his army. He was the author of a number of works. Speaking of him, Mme. de Staël said, "He was the only foreigner that became a model in the French style, instead of an imitator."

<sup>2</sup> Count Jean Antoine Ostrowski (born 1782, died 1845) was a Polish patriot and statesman, who took an active part in the affairs of Poland until its partition. He then removed to Paris, where the last years of his life were passed.

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unanimous voice of all the Powers united in this congress. In accepting the title of king, I shall endeavor to satisfy the wishes of the nation. The kingdom of Poland will be united to the empire by the bonds of its own constitution, upon which I shall endeavor to found the welfare of the nation. If the great interest of universal peace has not permitted the whole of Poland to remain united under the same sceptre, I will at least try to soften as much as possible the rigor of their separation and to obtain for them everywhere the peaceable enjoyment of their national liberty. Before the necessary formalities permit the publishing of the details relating to the arrangement of the affairs of Poland, I have wished that you should be the first informed of them by me in substance, and I authorize you to inform your compatriots of the contents of this letter.

“Receive the assurance of my sincere esteem,

“ALEXANDER.

“VIENNA, April 30, 1815.”

Nothing can give an idea of the joy with which this news filled the hearts of the true Poles; but in the midst of this universal rejoicing, while they were awaiting the arrival of their desired monarch, events occurred which changed the face of the whole of Europe. General Pozzo di Borgo,<sup>1</sup> minister of Russia in France, arrived at Vienna from Paris, an-

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo (born 1764, died 1842), an eminent French diplomatist who in 1803 entered the service of Russia and devoted himself to diplomacy, for which he was qualified by his penetration and address. He regarded Napoleon as a personal enemy, and contributed to his overthrow. In 1813 he took a prominent part in the Congress of Frankfort, and composed the famous declaration of the Allies. He acted as Russian Commissioner with the army of the Allies in 1815, and signed the Treaty of Paris. From 1815 to 1835 he was Russian ambassador at Paris.

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nouncing to the congress that the Bourbons were more firmly seated than ever upon the throne of France; and a fortnight later, in the midst of a great festival where all the divinities of Olympus and Parnassus were represented, the news arrived, like a clap of thunder: "Napoleon has escaped from the island of Elba; Napoleon is in France!" The person from whom I have these details, and who was an eye-witness of them, Count Salmour, said there was great alarm among the gods of the Empyrean and among those of the earth. Alexander was so wise as to retire immediately from the festival to hide his feelings from the public.

The next day, when they had recovered a little from the violent shock which an event of this kind naturally produced, reflection came to calm this sudden surprise and terror. "He is a madman! he is an adventurer!" they said of Napoleon. Outraged by the sharp reproaches which were addressed to him from all sides, on account of his ignorance of affairs in France, which it had been difficult to foresee, Pozzo di Borgo out-did every one in protestations, and said that Napoleon would be hanged on the first tree as soon as he entered France.

However, this *madman*, this adventurer, or rather this incomprehensible being who had escaped from the island of Elba upon a small brig, and had passed miraculously through the midst of the English vessels, landed in France with a handful of soldiers, and twenty days later entered Paris at the head of an army, declaring in his vauntful language that he alone was able to re-establish peace, and that he had come to restore it to Europe.

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The Bourbons were dispersed; Louis XVIII. was forced for a second time to quit the country and to abandon the throne of his fathers to the usurper. Louis XVIII. retired to Ghent; but what was to become of France, and of Europe?

The well attested news of the presence of Napoleon in Paris and the re-establishment of his power without a blow having been struck, filled the councils of the congress with terror and consternation. After so many generous efforts, such immense sacrifices, so much bloodshed, it was necessary to commence again, to renew the past efforts and sacrifices as if they had never been made. This idea was enough to fill the hearts of the sovereign allies with discouragement and dismay.

The Emperor Alexander declared that he was weary of war, and, above all, tired of exposing the lives of his soldiers. Other personal and just motives were joined to that repugnance. Prince Talleyrand had been sent by Louis XVIII. to bespeak the interest of the congress in behalf of France. It is difficult to discover what were the intentions of that able diplomat, working in apparent concord with all the Powers for the pacification of Europe, and, at the same time negotiating a treaty with Austria opposed to the political interests of Russia, — a treaty which tended to destroy that influence to which France owed her deliverance.

While Talleyrand, full of confidence in his influence in Paris, sought to prolong his engagement, he heard of the descent of Napoleon upon Paris and his entrance into the capital, and was informed that Alexander would no longer ignore the double-dealing



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of the French royalist ministry. How should he ward off this last blow? It was fatal! Talleyrand was too wise, his knowledge of politics was too extended for him not to feel that the Emperor Alexander alone could save France, by the immense forces at his command and by his influence over the other allied Powers.

Talleyrand, therefore, knowing Alexander's generosity, built upon it his last political hopes, and the hope of his own safety. He went and throwing himself at the feet of that prince, assured him that, blinded by patriotism, he had not been able to see the real interests of France and the bands of alliance which she ought to contract; then he begged the emperor to pardon him and not to abandon a cause which was that of all kings.

After a few moments of silence and reflection the emperor replied: "The question has nothing to do with me or with any personal offence which might affect me, but with the safety of France."

It must be acknowledged that without the extreme and indefatigable zeal which Talleyrand employed at this critical time, the congress would have been dissolved without having decided anything in favor of France.

With his usual magnanimity Alexander, putting aside all personal resentment, and thinking only of the interests of the common cause, ordered a considerable body of troops to march under the command of Marshal Barclay de Tolley, not against the French, but to the succor of the Bourbons against the army of Napoleon.



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## CHAPTER XX

I WILL not enter into the details of the campaign of 1815, marked by such great military deeds and terminated by the battle of Waterloo. The Emperor of Russia did not go to Paris until after the return of Louis XVIII. to the capital. Ever animated by generous thoughts and a peaceable spirit, Alexander showed himself in Paris under the conciliating character of a mediator ready to ward off the blows which the policy of the other powers was disposed to deal to France.

As the ministers plenipotentiary were preparing a new treaty of peace whose conditions seemed hard for France, Alexander went to the camp Les Vertus to inspect the troops in presence of the sovereign allies and gave the order of the day :—

“Treason and the perfidious designs of the enemy of public peace have met you again, brave soldiers, upon the same fields where you were conquerors. Thanks to the Almighty your valor need not display itself again. The measures employed by the allies have overthrown the audacious Napoleon before you were able to take part in the fray. He has been taken prisoner. But your march from the Dwina and Dniester to the Seine will sufficiently prove that Russia is not opposed to the peace of Europe, and that in spite of the great distance you are always ready to march in the cause of justice wherever the voice of your country and that of your sovereign shall call you.

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“In leaving you here far from your native land which is so dear to you, it gives me pleasure, my dear companions in arms, to show you my appreciation of the zeal and exactness which I have found in your ranks. May the blessings of the Most High accompany you to your firesides. His all-powerful hand has protected you in war and will guide you to your homes. Let us thank him for his goodness to us and never forget his sacred laws and that his mercy has assisted us because we have put our trust in him.”

The inhabitants of Champagne assembled in crowds in the environs of Les Vertus to see the prince whom they regarded as their protector. Learning that some French ladies were assembled at a farm-house to see the review, the Emperor Alexander sent them all sorts of refreshments. After the review was over, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia approached Alexander to compliment him upon the fine military appearance of a corps of forty thousand Russians who had manœuvred in their presence with excellent precision and perfect order. The emperor, still animated by the exercise which he had just had, placed his hand on his sword and answered: “I can, if it is necessary and if I am forced to do so, assemble here in two months two hundred thousand such troops.” This he said, wishing to have it understood that he was disposed to take up arms for France. Since it was to be desired that France should regain calmness and tranquillity in place of her continued internal dissensions, the policy of Europe demanded, in the interest of the balance of power, that France should remain great and strong.

Thanks to the active intervention of Alexander, France was permitted to preserve her old boundaries ;

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but to satisfy the severe justice of the allied Powers, she saw herself condemned to pay a large indemnity, and to the support of one hundred and fifty thousand foreign troops. Nations by their mistakes draw upon themselves terrible responsibilities, of which time alone can efface the traces.

It was against the advice of Alexander that the works of art acquired through the valor of the French at different times were taken away from Paris. A very wise idea and one very favorable to the study of art led Alexander to propose that these masterpieces, instead of being dispersed to different countries, should continue to ornament the beautiful palace where they were united, giving to the museum of the Louvre the name of Museum of Europe. The Apollo of the Belvedere and the Venus de Médicis would certainly have received more homage at Paris than elsewhere. This proposition, however, did not meet the views of the other Powers.

The Emperor Alexander felt himself compelled to declare his opposition to prevent the destruction of the bridges of Austerlitz and Jena. His views were too broad, his mind too great for him not to see that it was not alone to a monument of stone that the memory of French glory was attached. But it was not given to all the world to think and feel as he did.

During his sojourn in France Alexander was constantly occupied in alleviating the misfortunes of the inhabitants. He had a list made of the widows and orphans of agriculturists whose homes had been destroyed during the war, and all those who wished to emigrate to the Crimea received from imperial munificence the necessary succor and passports.

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Alexander displayed such perfect confidence in the French that he refused the escort which they offered him, saying it was unnecessary in France, and that he was in a friendly country. Some one in Paris wishing to know where the Emperor of Russia resided, he answered: "Upon the field of Virtue (*plaine des Vertus*), at the hotel of Magnanimity." This is not much in the style of Mademoiselle Scudéri's novels.

In the short space of one hundred days, events followed each other with the rapidity of thought. We saw Napoleon land in France and reascend the throne; Louis XVIII. retire to Ghent; the combined armies march, attack, and conquer Napoleon; the latter flee and confide his destinies to the waves, less perfidious than the English, to whom this second Themistocles, this new Hannibal surrendered; finally, Louis XVIII. reassume the crown and enter his capital.

The destroyer of the peace of Europe, this new Prometheus who had not stolen celestial fire, but who would possess the universe, Napoleon had been banished to a rock in the midst of the ocean, where he was to endure the torment of a devouring ambition which he was not permitted to gratify.

The history of Alexander and Napoleon affords a striking example of divine justice. How had Alexander been able to triumph over that man whose superior genius seemed invincible? Because God was on his side, because he never gloried in his success; while Napoleon, who placed all his confidence in the strength of his arms, had twice seen his formidable armies dissolve away, and his power vanish

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like a dream. Unhappy the man who rests upon an arm of flesh!

I made this prayer at that time, for the Emperor of Russia: "May the good Providence always protect Alexander. May God help him in battle by His strength, and in his councils by His wisdom! Deign above all, O God, to preserve him from the intoxication of success, so fatal to princes and so prejudicial to the happiness of their subjects! Deign to lend him Thy light in all that he does in Thy name! Bless all his undertakings and hold his heart always in Thy powerful hands! Amen!"

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## CHAPTER XXI

**S**ATISFIED with having terminated this memorable campaign of 1815 advantageously for the happiness of Europe, and to reap as a reward for his labors a long and settled peace, Alexander turned gladly from the horrors of war and the cares of State, and occupied himself in the affairs of his people. He was expected at Warsaw to be crowned King of Poland, and finally arrived there after having celebrated at Berlin the wedding of his brother the Grand Duke Nicholas with the princess royal of Prussia, strengthening his alliance with that power by the double ties of blood and political bonds.

The Emperor Alexander arrived at Warsaw on the 26th of October, 1815. He made his entrance on horseback, wearing the Polish uniform and the decoration of the White Eagle. All the windows and streets on his Majesty's\* route were decorated with flowers, draperies, and mottoes. The various deputations met him under a triumphal arch which bore this inscription: *Hic ames dici pater atque princeps*. The emperor would not accept the keys of the town, which were offered him by the president of the municipality, and responded thus to the speech of the magistrate: "I do not accept the keys, because I am not come here as a conqueror, but as a protector and friend who desires to see you all happy. But I will accept bread and salt as the

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most useful gift of God." The Poles had finally found a king, a father. On the evening of that memorable day the town was illuminated with allegorical transparencies, and an innumerable crowd circulated through the streets shouting the name of their king, Alexander. The emperor was touched by these proofs of attachment and enthusiasm, upon which he had not reckoned, believing with his usual modesty that the Poles preferred Napoleon.

Alexander gave the Poles a constitution, founded partly on the Code of Napoleon, a senate, and the right to assemble diets. He named General Zaionczek<sup>1</sup> to the first place in the kingdom, that of lieutenant-general, and apprised him himself of his nomination. The old general said to the emperor that his fortune was too limited to permit him to accept this position. "That is one merit the more in my eyes," answered the emperor, assigning to him a revenue of 200,000 florins, and conferring upon him later the title of prince.

The emperor and king having admitted into his presence a deputation of the departments and towns of the kingdom, the palatine Malachowski expressed in the name of his compatriots the feelings of love, veneration, and gratitude with which they were

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Zaionczek (Zajaczek) (born 1752, died 1826), a Polish general, the descendant of a poor but noble family who by industry and study rose to positions of honor and influence. After the declaration of war against Russia by Napoleon he assisted in the raising of an army of 80,000 to aid him. After the Peace of Paris, when Alexander re-organized the army in Poland, he appointed Zaionczek general of infantry; and when in 1815 the Czar gave Poland a new constitution, Zaionczek was named viceroy of the new kingdom, and the Grand Duke Constantine was given the command of the army.

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inspired by the noble conqueror who had given to their country a new political existence.

The emperor answered: "I receive the expression of the sentiments which you manifest for me with deep emotion. I know that this country has borne great reverses, the traces of which must be effaced. To help to do this promptly, I have given orders that the Russian armies retire from the country. In occupying yourselves with that interesting class, the cultivators of the soil, you have done that which is the most agreeable to me. All that you undertake in that direction will meet with my heartiest approval. I shall always be ready to consider all requests which are presented to me, whether by individuals or departments, and will give them my serious attention. My desires shall always be for the prosperity of your country and the good of its inhabitants."

Count Oginski (the same who has published Memoirs very favorably received by the public) came to Warsaw at the head of a Lithuanian deputation to offer their respects to the new King of Poland. The emperor received him in the throne room. M. Oginski observed that during his conversation when he compared the rapid victories of the emperor with the lightning, the emperor's countenance took on an imposing expression, and that tears came into his eyes when he spoke of the gratitude of the Lithuanians. Yet there are persons who suspect this noble character of falseness; and Napoleon said, in speaking of Alexander, that he *was the most beautiful, the most refined, and the falsest of the Greeks*. It is not necessary to refute such calum-



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nies. The entire life of Alexander is an answer to them.

During the emperor's stay at Warsaw brilliant entertainments were given by General Krasinski, the Count Palatine Potocki,<sup>1</sup> and the Princess of Würtemberg. There was also a fancy-dress ball given by the town, where there was an assemblage of all that taste, riches, grace, and beauty could show.

My mother, who on account of ill-health could not attend these festivities, had the honor to be presented to his Majesty at the house of her sister the Countess Radzivil, and to thank the emperor for all the kindness which he had shown her family. The emperor authorized my mother to announce his arrival at Vilna, and he deigned to speak of me with his usual indulgence. The emperor stopped only one day at Vilna, sleeping at Towiany.

My father formed the project of leaving as soon as the ball which was to take place on the arrival of his

<sup>1</sup> Count Stanislas-Kotska Potocki (born 1757, died 1821) organized the grand duchy at the time of the French invasion, and was rewarded by being appointed Senator Palatine and Chief Counsel of the Minister of State. He was constant in his loyalty to Alexander; when the emperor elevated him to the dignity of Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, the appointment was received with universal applause, and Potocki was diligent in proving himself worthy of the honor. He created the University, the Observatory, the Botanical Garden, the Museum of Natural History, the different schools of surgery, and many smaller institutions. In all ways he showed himself the friend of learning and the protector of science. In 1818 he was named President of the Senate and his discourses are regarded as models of oratory. His death was considered a public calamity, and his family were the recipients of testimonials from all parts of the empire; for by his singularly affectionate nature, culture, and elevated character he had attached to himself all who knew him.

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Majesty was over, and going with me and several other persons to Towiany. He hoped to be able to speak with the emperor of different abuses which had crept into the government, and of the manner in which certain agents in power responded to the ideas of equity and moderation of so good a monarch. There were disquieting rumors at Vilna.

It was said that there had been formed at St. Petersburg a party of Russians discontented with the interest which the emperor took in the Poles, and all he did for the kingdom of Poland. The emperor himself made no allusion to this matter, as he had asked the Poles at Warsaw not to compromise him with his own people in their patriotic speeches. I learned later at Paris, and I have it from a person worthy of confidence, that in 1815 Marshal Soult found papers which divulged horrible designs. The marshal hastened to make them known to the Emperor Alexander, who thanked him, saying that the danger was not so real as he thought. What a fatal security, which it is difficult to understand! How the Emperor Alexander, with that rare sagacity which distinguished him, that clearness of judgment which led him with reason to desire to extinguish the fires of revolution in other countries of Europe, could not see the embers that smouldered in his own States! We must believe that his heart deceived his judgment, and refused to believe in such monstrous ingratitude on the part of his subjects. Several years ago M. de C. and I were terrified by seditious rumors which came to our ears, and we told our fears to certain agents of the government, who treated them as exaggerated ideas — aristocratic

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chimeras. Experience has proved that our fears were but too well founded.

The Emperor Alexander arrived at Vilna at night, where they had made preparations in advance for a ball, illuminations, etc. My father had a transparency placed over the door of his house representing Vilna with its picturesque environs, and these words: *Le retour de l'Aurore nous promet des jours sereins*. I was notified in the morning by an aide-de-camp of Prince Wolkonski, of the visit of his Majesty at one o'clock in the afternoon. There was in the meantime a presentation of the gentlemen at the palace. The emperor on perceiving my father said, "Ah, it is you, Count!" and when my father would have said something to justify himself in the eyes of his Majesty, the emperor interrupted him, saying: "All is forgotten, the past is forgotten." My father, who had infinite tact, felt that the word *forgotten* meant rather *pardoned*; my sister and I felt it also in admiring this noble and refined character, who could pardon but not forget the wrongs that had been done him. My father admired and really loved the emperor; he would never have been drawn into the other party except by the force of circumstances; he did not dare to be at my house when Alexander came there, and it was my sister this time who aided me in receiving the emperor, whom she had had the honor of knowing at the time of his Majesty's first visit to Vilna.

After the first compliments, I asked his Majesty if he had been satisfied with his visit at Warsaw. The emperor answered that Warsaw had not quite met his expectations, on account of the irregularity of its

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buildings and the filth of its streets; but he thought that it was susceptible of embellishment. Then he said some pleasant things about Polish society and the Poles in general. He said: "I have not kept all my promises to them; I have done nothing for the Poles, but in working for them I have had great obstacles to overcome in the congress. The other sovereigns were opposed as much as possible to my projects in regard to Poland. However, we have made the first step."

I could not accustom myself to hear the emperor speak of "the kingdom." "The kingdom," he said, "has suffered greatly. One does not notice it in the towns during these great festivities, but the country feels the war cruelly." Alexander praised the fine appearance of the Polish troops. "They will have a little trouble in forgetting the old régime and in learning the new, but that will come. There must be subordination among the soldiers, and exact discipline; for when the army reasons the State is lost. It is thus that Napoleon has been the cause of his own downfall, by permitting the absence of discipline among his troops.

The emperor then spoke of France and the French, to whom he did not spare the epithets "mean," "avaricious," "filthy," and "frivolous." "Paris," he said, "is dirty, morally as well as physically." I could not resist answering this attack. "Sire," I said, "I recognize one merit in the French,—their knowing how to appreciate the goodness of your Majesty." At these words the emperor colored, then said with a smile: "I confess, mademoiselle, that I have but done my duty. It was frightful to see the

## Emperor Alexander I.

evils about me, — the Austrians' and the Prussians' fury and cupidity, which it was difficult to control. They wanted to use the right of reprisal, but that right has always been revolting to me, for one ought never to take vengeance except by doing good for evil."

With what sad pleasure I recall these words. Since then I have always kept a careful journal, and my readers can be assured not only of the exactness of my account of events, but that there is nothing altered in the emperor's expressions which are found in this work. How beautiful indeed were these words in the mouth of the greatest sovereign in the world! It was plain to see that the emperor spoke with satisfaction, although always with modesty, of his successes, and of his work during the three years of his absence. He had grown much thinner in figure, which gave him a very young appearance. You saw no longer that charm of sensibility which the misfortunes of the year 1812 had given his face, but always the same grace, kindness, and affability. Still, one could see a little change of manner in his intercourse with men.

I asked his Majesty if it was true that he preferred London to Paris. "I acknowledge it," he said; "one does not see in London the beautiful edifices which adorn Paris, but there is infinitely more order, regularity, and cleanliness." He insisted very strongly on the last point, making the inhabitants of Petersburg observe strict cleanliness. He said he feared they had grown lax on that point during his absence.

The emperor spoke with admiration of the English

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parks, and told us that nowhere was the art of gardening so well understood as in England. As my sister seemed to take a lively interest in the details which the emperor gave on this subject, his Majesty asked her if she had fine gardens, and expressed great regret that, on account of the bad weather, he was not able to visit Arcadia when he had passed the night at the château of my Aunt Radzivil, not far from Warsaw.

The frost had been very severe for several days, and our apartment was cold. The emperor, who noticed it, said he feared he should not be able to bear the climate of St. Petersburg after having passed three winters in France and England; moreover, the beautiful Parisian ladies, in the midst of their elegance and luxury, nearly died of cold in their apartments. The emperor expressed his regret that he could not remain longer at Vilna.

The ball commenced at eight o'clock. The emperor waltzed for a long time with me and with other ladies. He danced with grace and dignity. In dancing the Polonaise with Prince Wolkonski, who then replaced Count Tolstoi about his Majesty, I told him of our plan to go to Towiany, — a project, I added, which it was not possible to carry out, as his Majesty was to leave in the morning to go there himself. The prince said: "Your project is charming; you must not give it up. Leave immediately after the ball; you will arrive in time, and I will retard the departure of his Majesty." The emperor, who followed us in the dance, would absolutely know what we were talking about, and we were obliged to explain, adding that we could no longer think of the project, although our

## Emperor Alexander I.

friends at Towiany, knowing our intention, had ordered a relay of horses on the route; but the lightning speed with which the emperor travelled would not permit us to reach there in time. Thanking me with the most amiable vivacity, the emperor maintained, with Prince Wolkonski, that by leaving at eleven o'clock in the night, putting myself in a good carriage with a *good pelisse* to insure me against the cold, and having good horses, I could make the journey from Vilna to Towiany very easily. "Moreover," said his Majesty, "I shall not leave so very early." I repeated this conversation to my father and sister, who decided that I must go to Towiany. But my father, after the somewhat cold reception he had had from the emperor, decided that it was best for him not to go. My sister, who was just recovering from an illness, could not expose herself to the great cold. My aunt, Countess Corvin Kossakowska, *née* Potocka, decided to go with me, and my brother-in-law, Count Gunther, would accompany us. We changed our dresses and started at once. Before our departure, my father charged me particularly to speak a few words of justification for him and my brother to the emperor. Our carriage broke down on the way. Fortunately, we procured another in the neighborhood and continued our journey to Towiany, where we arrived at dawn, dying with laughter. After Vilkomir, which is about four miles from Towiany, they had taken us for the emperor, and had rendered us homage in consequence, the guard presenting arms, the couriers rushing ahead to announce the arrival of the monarch; and at Towiany the whole society of the town, assembled at the palace, pressed



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forward to receive his Majesty. The emperor did not arrive till an hour later, and smiled upon perceiving my aunt and me. He seemed annoyed at having arrived so late, and complained that they had made a summer road in winter. The fact is that, not knowing that his Majesty travelled in a sleigh, they had swept the snow from the road all along the route and covered it with pine branches and leaves. We knew also that the emperor had been dissatisfied with the parade at Vilna. As it was not known till the morning that he would give the order for it, the troops were not ready at the hour indicated. The emperor being obliged to wait on the spot, he severely reprimanded General P., and afterwards the garrison.

After the usual compliments and presentations, the emperor went to change his dress in his old apartment. He soon returned and approaching my aunt and me thanked us gracefully for our "amiable attention," asking if we had had any accident on the way, and expressing his surprise that, having travelled all night in the open air, we looked so fresh and untired. "As for me," he said, "my face burns like fire."

The conversation then became general, or rather the emperor alone took the burden of it in the most interesting manner. He spoke much of England, of the magnificence of its parks, of English agriculture, of the machinery newly invented, and above all of the wise institutions of the country and the welfare of its inhabitants. "What a happy country," said he, "where the rights of each individual are respected and inviolable!" In speaking of Napoleon the emperor said: "I predicted to him what has happened; but he would not believe me."



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The company was not the same as at the first visit of his Majesty to Towiany. The old Count Moriconi was dead. The Mesdemoiselles Grabowska and Moriconi were married and gone; but the sister of the latter, the amiable Countess Félicie Plater was there with her excellent and worthy mother. The emperor spoke much of those who were absent by death, and of those who were separated by distance.

His Majesty consented to sup with the whole company. In leaving the table he came to speak to me of my mother, and described a pleasant little scene which took place between his Majesty and her. "Having made her acquaintance at your aunt's," said the prince, "I wished to kiss her hand, a natural homage which one offers to women; but she refused it, and I had to insist; every time I tried to take her hand she drew it away; finally it grew too amusing! Let your aunt tell you about it, and Prince Antoine, who was present. They laughed so much."

At the moment of retiring the emperor said: "I must insist that the ladies will not give themselves the trouble to rise early in the morning, but I fear that they will not do me that favor." We answered that we would endeavor to make use of every moment that we were allowed to enjoy his presence. Although very much fatigued by the preceding night, my aunt and I must still describe to the ladies of the house the ball, and the toilets of the ladies at Vilna. Moreover, at six o'clock, though it was not yet light, we must be dressed and in the drawing-room. The emperor was not late, and asked how we had all passed the night. He asked me if I had any *commitments* for St. Petersburg. Instead of answering, I

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asked orders of his Majesty for Vilna. The emperor turning to the circle of ladies (everybody was standing). "Mademoiselle will not give me commissions for Petersburg, and asks me for them for Vilna." I do not know why these words hurt me. I had hoped that his Majesty would say something to me about my father. The remembrance of his former kindness to him compared with his present coldness, gave me the idea that my father would perhaps be displeased that I had not attempted to excuse him or my brothers to the emperor.

But always surrounded, I had not an opportunity to speak ; moreover, what could I have said? What use would it have been to recall the past? And finally, the fatigue of two nights without sleep had unstrung my nerves and agitated me to such a degree that I felt ill, and I went into the adjoining room to recover myself. The emperor, struck by the sudden change of my face, followed me to ask me if I was not well. I said that the heat of the stoves had overcome me, but it would soon pass, and I would return to the salon with Countess Moriconi. The emperor told the ladies what had made me ill, saying that the heat of our houses in winter was very bad for the health. He added that he had been obliged to open the windows of his bedroom. I saw the kindness of the emperor in all that he said, but I was at the same time so troubled at the idea of having made myself ridiculous in his eyes that I felt very much annoyed with myself. I could not control myself; I felt suffocated. Countess Plater, who was near me, drew me out of the salon. "In the name of God," said this good friend, "control yourself; think that twenty

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persons have their eyes on you!" Then she added some pleasantry, and I burst out laughing. Finally I succeeded in calming myself, but my eyes were red from weeping, and I was very much confused at having made such a scene. The emperor returned to us and anxiously asked me if I was subject to such attacks. I answered that I had often suffered from nervous troubles. "Oh, very often!" repeated my good friend. His Majesty then said his "good-byes" and we followed him into the drawing-room where he begged me to remain sentinel over Countess Moriconi to prevent her from going out. But no sooner had the emperor departed than the countess followed him to the steps. His Majesty, already seated in his sleigh, made me a sign of reproach, saying, "The sentinel has not done her duty." I answered, laughing, that I had been obliged to give up my prisoner.

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## CHAPTER XXII

A LITTLE time after his return to St. Petersburg, the emperor made a stroke of authority which caused great excitement in the capital. He expelled the order of Jesuits from St. Petersburg, later from Pototsch, and finally from the whole empire, declaring that it was with justice that all the sovereigns had driven that dangerous and intriguing order from their States. Perhaps the Jesuits have justly been reproached with too much zeal for conversion, which was dangerous to the religion of the country. They attracted to their sermons numbers of persons of distinction, and a great many ladies of the court changed their religion without the knowledge of their families.

The Jesuits abandoned without a murmur their fortunes, their houses, and their flourishing establishments, considering the decree which had fallen upon them as sent from heaven, and bending, in appearance at least, under a Divine hand. A Jesuit of the house of Riga, whose establishment was venerated even by the Lutherans, replied to a person who commiserated him on his lot: "I shall find everywhere five feet of earth, and death, toward which I hasten."

The emperor did several remarkable acts of justice at this same time. He degraded General Tutchlof to the rank of a common soldier because he had allowed pillage in Lithuania, in the campaign of 1812. He punished crime with a severity which inspired a

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just fear throughout the whole empire. The emperor proved, in a word, that it is possible to join to that kindness and excessive sensibility with which he has been reproached, both firmness and justice, qualities indispensable in a sovereign. There was a manifesto published in the name of the emperor about this time which seems to us full of piety and noble sentiments. In it Alexander speaks of godlike St. Louis, and of his success, and his triumphs as never sovereign before spoke, and with a moderation of which history shows few examples. I remarked, however, that having triumphed over Napoleon in this world he seemed to wish to pursue him to the other, and arraign him before the tribunal of God.

In the year 1816 I made a journey to Carlsbad, with my father and one of my relatives. Upon our return we stopped at Warsaw, where the emperor was expected on the 30th of September. We lodged with my mother in the most beautiful street in Warsaw, in a large house, but so full of people on account of the arrival of the emperor, that I could only obtain two small rooms on the ground-floor under the *porte cochère*.

The emperor arrived at night and I knew it at once by the movement of the soldiers rushing through the streets. Nothing is more amusing than to watch the scenes of the outside world from behind a curtain, provided one has a taste for observation and a total lack of self-consciousness.

The same day a grand parade took place in the square of Saxony. I saw the emperor pass through the street on horseback in the Polish uniform with the blue and white plume on his cap. This was the

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first time I had seen him wear the Polish colors. The first ball took place at the viceroy's. My Aunt Radzivil took me there. She had already seen his Majesty, and among other things had told him of my arrival. The emperor deigned to speak to my aunt of me in terms which I will not write down here.

My aunt conducted me to the middle of the ball-room to present me to his Majesty, who addressed me saying he hoped it was not on account of my health that I had visited the baths.

While dancing with me Alexander spoke of the indisposition which I had had at Towiany, and asked me if I had had any returns of such attacks. The emperor having shown a desire to visit me, I took the liberty of saying to his Majesty that I was too badly lodged to have the honor of receiving him, but that I would try to get my mother to help me in that matter. The emperor called my attention to the Polish uniform which he wore, and I said I had had the pleasure already of seeing him in that dress. He asked where. "When your Majesty passed through the street to go to the parade." "But," he said, "I looked everywhere and I did not see you."

The emperor left the ball at eleven o'clock. He kept early hours, rising very early in the morning, either to be present at the drilling of the soldiers or to work with his ministers. The next day he had a grand review of the Polish army, on the plain of Povonski, which was covered with an immense throng of people in carriages, on foot, and on horseback, all come to witness this brilliant military spectacle.

At the arrival of his Majesty the soldiers cried

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*hourra*, and the band struck up the favorite air of "God Save the King." His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine seemed enchanted to do the honors of so fine and well drilled an army before his august brother. At the end of the manœuvres the troops defiled in good order,—the officers making their war horses prance, and saluting with the point of the sword in presence of his Majesty, who stood cap in hand, as the army passed by. The following Sunday, after the parade, the emperor was present at a mass celebrated in the church of the Sacred Cross for the soldiers, and there I renewed my prayers for that excellent prince.

Having returned home, I had hardly changed my dress when my maid suddenly cried, "There is the emperor!" I looked out and, to be sure, there was his Majesty at the door of his carriage just driving into the *porte cochère*. A little annoyed at a visit which had not been previously announced, I hoped that he would go up to my mother and as I went out to assure myself of this, I saw the emperor spring from his carriage and come directly into the room which opened into mine, laughing a little at my confusion, asking pardon for his *indiscretion*, and saying that it was his servant who had shown him where I lodged. Finally, seeing that I hesitated, his Majesty gave me his hand, begging me to show him the way, and *volens volens* I had to show him into the room where still reigned the disorder of my toilet. In my embarrassment I did not know whether I ought to occupy myself with the emperor or arrange the room. Victoire, my maid, arrived with her deliberate air and saved me that trouble. Alexander liked to visit ladies

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thus in the morning without being announced. He surprised one in a Chinese dressing-gown; another putting on her bonnet awry to hide her disordered hair. The wife of the viceroy got a cold from coming too suddenly out of her bath when it was announced that the emperor had come. All this trouble and confusion amused the emperor exceedingly; for at this epoch of his life he was very fond of fun. When we were seated he made a joke by offering a chair to my little dog, saying that it was quite right that she should be one of the company also.

Then his Majesty spoke of the review, asked me if I was there, and what I thought of it. Then my mother, having been told that his Majesty was there, hastened downstairs. I announced her, and the emperor said, "Now you are going to see a repetition of the scene I told you about." And truly, the emperor going to my mother attempted to take her hand and remove her glove. But my mother respectfully resisted. The emperor said, laughing: "But, madame, do you think I have the pest? What is there so extraordinary in kissing a lady's hand?" Then he kissed mine to give the example. But my mother maintained that, in spite of the difference in their ages, she could not help considering the emperor as a father. This little contest made us all laugh very much.

The emperor asked me many questions about my journey. I mentioned a number of persons whom he had known at Vienna, among others, the Landgravine of Fürstenberg, a woman of great intelligence, educated in France. She was a sister of



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Prince Schwarzenberg, whom Alexander called his brother in arms. I told his Majesty that the land-gravine never called him otherwise than Henri IV. The emperor made a little face and shrugged his shoulders; I guessed why. They say that the Emperor Alexander, during his stay at Vienna was very much pleased with the society of Princess Gabrielle D., a niece of Prince Schwarzenberg, a person even less remarkable perhaps for the charms of her face than for the estimable qualities of her character.

"You go everywhere," said his Majesty. "You go everywhere, and will not come to St. Petersburg. I will prove mathematically that you have just made a longer journey than you would to go to St. Petersburg, where you would be received with open arms." The emperor spoke to my mother of my conduct during the campaign of 1812, and said that he and his entertained a feeling of great respect for me.

His Majesty inquired about my sister and asked me what news there was from Vilna, assuring me that the last time he was there it was to see me, for his most direct road was by Kowno. "But let that remain *entre nous*, I beg of you, or I should be in bad repute with the Lithuanians." This idea amused us. Then he continued: "I have seen nothing in the foreign armies which surpasses them. It is possible that there are as handsome soldiers, but none so imposing as the Polish troops; and it must be true, for I am very difficult to please." I could not help taking up this word *difficult*, and said laughing that the difficulty was only *feigned*.

"What," said his Majesty, "do you believe that I am not particular, and that I do not know how to get

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into a temper?" (A pretended ill-temper, thought I.) "However, I made a grand row at Vilna, about the garrison. Did they tell you about it?"

"Oh, yes, sire, I know that that scene was played admirably, with incomparable gravity. I only regretted not having been a witness."

The emperor turned to my mother and said, "You see how mademoiselle laughs at me."

"Sire, that is because you have spoiled her," answered my mother.

Then I added: "After having heard General P. reprimanded for form's sake, the public knew also that your Majesty took particular pains to assure the poor man that a mistake would not make his long and faithful service forgotten." The emperor smiled.

I said we were expecting my aunt to dinner, and she would set up a loud scream when she found his Majesty there. This was a habit of Madame de Radzivil when anything astonished her. She did it with a particular grace, which has been celebrated by the Prince de Ligne in the portrait he has made of her under the name of *Armidowska*.

"I hope she will not scream too loud," said the emperor, "or I will tell how she came to me by a private staircase. I was walking one evening on the terrace of the château, when suddenly I saw a woman at the windows in the apartments of the marshal of the palace, who was making signs to me. I had not the impudence to suppose that it was one of the pretty daughters of the marshal. Finally I approached, and recognized your aunt. She came down on the terrace, and I had her go upstairs to my apartments."

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As the emperor finished speaking, the door burst open, and my aunt entered upon the arm of her son, Prince Antoine Radzivil, followed by her niece, the charming Isabelle B., making the little scream which I had foretold. "How is this?" she said to the emperor, "before coming to see me! You see what conduct." Then commenced some good-natured badinage between the emperor and her.

"Why should I go to see you, since you come to see me?" said the emperor.

"And in such a mean little room!" said my aunt.

"But I did not come to admire the rooms," said his Majesty.

Prince Antoine offered to kiss the hand of the emperor, who embraced him cordially. My cousin had just arrived from Berlin, and was the bearer of compliments for his Majesty from the King of Prussia. Everybody spoke at the same time in that little room; one laughed, another screamed, and another embraced. All etiquette was put aside; one would have thought it was a family reunion. Presently the emperor, who was very merry, commenced to do the honors by offering chairs to the ladies. We all sat down. The Grand Duke Nicholas and Princess Charlotte of Prussia were spoken of. I said I had seen a bust of the princess at Posen which was lovely. "Yes," said the emperor, "and her character is like her face." My aunt asked about the young grand-dukes, whom she had known when they were children. The emperor said they were very handsome, a head taller than he and slender in proportion to their age. My aunt then recounted her interview with the emperor on the terrace. "It would require a Tasso to

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describe it," said she, in an amusingly exalted tone. "He was so handsome by the light of the moon; he had the air of a Renaud, and I, was I not Armida!" She said a hundred other nonsensical things, which Alexander took as compliments; which in fact they were when addressed to that prince. Finally he interrupted her. "Please stop your poetry; I have never read any of those things they have written about me. I like your prose better. Let us talk of the review. How do you like my soldiers?" My aunt complimented them. "Well," said the emperor, maliciously, touching my hand to call my attention to the expression of my aunt's face, "you ought not to regret for them your Garenne (a charming country-house about a league from Warsaw).

My aunt immediately exclaimed that she was not the least displeased that this house which she had just bought had been taken for military quarters. After a few pleasantries of this kind the emperor asked her: "Are you never coming to St. Petersburg again? You must come and bring your niece, and I will give you some little stones, as I did before." These "*little stones*" were an obelisk of rose-colored granite, on a base of porphyry, which is placed in Arcadia. "Oh," said my aunt, "I would not ask anything better than to go there with her, but they will not let me go; you must send me an *oukase*." "Very well," said the emperor, "I will send a little mandate; only come."

His Majesty then rose, saying: "There is never company so good that it must not separate. I must go home. My children wait dinner for me." These *children* were the generals and colonels of the Polish

## Emperor Alexander I.

army, who had the honor of dining with the emperor that day. My aunt followed him, saying she had a thousand things to say to him; and among others she spoke to him of one of her protégés, for whom she solicited the key of chamberlain. "For," she said, in that tone which she knew so well to make comic without derogating from the nobility of her manners, "as long as he has n't that wonderful key, he is like the *fox without a tail*."

We conducted the emperor to his carriage, and my aunt, watching him mount, said: "Is n't he handsome, is n't he adorable, is n't he unique!" Two days later, as my aunt was dining again with my mother, she received a note from M. de Novosiltzoff, the minister of his Majesty at Warsaw, which said to my aunt that "*the angel of angels*" having deigned to consent to dine with him the next day, he begged her to bring her niece also, as the emperor wished to have the pleasure of seeing her. The tone of this note, so flattering as far as it concerned me, pleased as much as it surprised me: for I hardly knew M. de Novosiltzoff at that time. We immediately guessed the source from which this graceful attention came, which was another proof of goodness and kindness that I had never deserved, and for which I was grateful, as I ought to have been.

My aunt came to take me to this dinner. M. de Novosiltzoff received us with the politeness for which he was distinguished, thanking my aunt for having brought me. She answered for me, for I was too embarrassed to make words and compliments. The entire household of the emperor, the ministers, and a few persons of distinction were already assembled.

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There were no other ladies except the wife of the viceroy, the wife of the secretary of state, and Madame Sobolewoska, a very *distinguée* woman in every respect, and also the niece of M. de Novosiltzoff, a very charming person. I immediately made the acquaintance of these two ladies and made common cause with them, for all three of us, I especially, had never been to a grand dinner of ceremony. Madame N. said I was afraid without reason; "for," she said, "when my uncle asked permission to invite ladies, you were one of the first whom his Majesty named."

When the emperor was announced, M. de Novosiltzoff and his niece went out to receive him. Then the emperor approached the ladies. He made his excuses to Madame Sobolewoska for having disturbed her by coming to see her in the morning (she was dressing). Alexander spoke of her son, who, very young, had just entered service, and who the emperor said was very handsome. "He resembles his mother, then," said I. "Oh, no, not at all," said that lady, with vivacity. The emperor laughed; then he asked me if I had been to the review, and I said Morpheus had prevented my going. He wanted to know also if I knew the environs of Warsaw. I replied that the bad weather had prevented me from exploring them, but in general I preferred those of Vilna. The emperor, guessing my thought, smiled and said he shared my opinion in that regard.

The dinner was very grand. At table the Grand Duke Constantine saluted me, but unfortunately I did not see it. His Imperial Highness said to my aunt, who was placed next to him, "Your niece is very sparing of her bows!" My aunt repeated to me

## Emperor Alexander I.

word for word what the prince had just said. Then I made haste, laughing, to make two or three deep reverences.

After leaving the table, the company was grouped without order in the salon. The emperor commenced talking with my aunt near the fireplace. I heard him call me and I approached. He said to me: "Ask your aunt to take you to see her houses. You will be pleased with them. You will see what good order reigns there." I thought he was speaking again of Garenne, but it was of two houses at Warsaw which they had taken for military quarters. The emperor said laughingly that my aunt had made a gratuitous gift of them to the country, and as a recompense for it he and his brother would give the princess a cap and riding-habit of military cloth. My aunt did not relish this joke very much, but she pretended to laugh because she had a request to make of his Majesty. She commenced by saying to M. de Novosiltzoff in Russian, "Tell him to do all that Madame de Radzivil wants!" The emperor said to me, "See how she speaks Russian!" "It is impossible," I said, "to ask more in fewer words." The emperor repeated what I had said to M. de Novosiltzoff, adding that it was quite true. "Certainly," said the latter, "for if your Majesty ordered it I would have to do all that it may please the princess to ask." The emperor then wanted to know what the request was. It concerned a certain extension of land which my aunt wished to get from the crown to enlarge her Arcadia. "It is not my fault," said she, "that I have never been able to end this business. I have bargained with three bishops and with Davoust, who owned this domain, but

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they have all haggled over the price. But you, sire, I hope you will not haggle."

This expression addressed to a sovereign was so perfectly ridiculous that it had its effect. The emperor assured her that he would do his best not to do that. "But," said he, "of what extent is this land?" "Four versts square." "What!" exclaimed his Majesty. "The half of it would be sufficient for the whole Polish army to manœuvre on! And what will you give me for it?" "Sire, you shall have two hundred and fifty florins rent annually." The affected avidity of my aunt on the one side, and the pretended avarice of the emperor, who seemed to be afraid of being cheated, on the other, were very amusing. The parties separated without having concluded anything.



# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXIII

OF all the beautiful entertainments which took place during the stay of the Emperor Alexander at Warsaw, the most delightful and the best arranged, I think, was that given by the senator palatine, Count Stanilaus Potocki. As I was dancing the Polonaise with the emperor he made many jokes about an Englishman who was staying at Warsaw on his way north ; his Majesty said I had done wonders in making him waltz in time, a thing that had never before happened to an Englishman since the world began.

I asked his Majesty if he had been satisfied with the manœuvres ; he said yes, and asked me if they had interested me. I said assuredly ; as a good Pole I had much pleasure in being there, but as a good Lithuanian I had suffered a feeling of pain, even of envy. He understood my idea in a moment, for he was gifted with remarkable perspicacity in grasping the most obscure sense of a phrase ; vulgarly speaking, he understood half a word. Pressing my hand kindly he said : “ Be reassured, the thing is already arranged ; ” and then fearing that he would be heard by those who preceded or followed us in the dance, Alexander spoke in my ear assuring me that we were to have a similar corps of troops in Lithuania, a regiment at Vilna and a regiment at Minsk ; in fact, the same internal organization as in Warsaw. I assured the emperor that he would find there the same zeal, also, and that the Lithuanians would not fall

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short of the Poles in anything. "You will already find changes in the government of Lithuania," said his Majesty. "Many of the places are already occupied by people of the country."

My heart was so full of what the emperor had told me that I could not find words to thank him; yet I told him that the idea which he perhaps entertained that his Majesty was less appreciated in Lithuania than at Warsaw pained me. He hastened to reassure me on that subject. A few moments later, when he came to take me for a waltz, I said, laughing, that his Majesty apparently wished to assure himself if it was really I who had made Mr. Wentworth waltz in time. The emperor answered in the same tone, that he flattered himself that he could waltz as well as he, and after a few turns he asked me what I thought. I answered that if Mr. Wentworth knew it, he would probably feel himself very much honored by such emulation. I asked the emperor, in the intervals of the waltz, if he intended to return by way of Vilna. "No," said he, "that *détour* would take two days, and I am obliged to return to St. Petersburg for my mother's birthday; moreover, I have seen at Warsaw all that I could wish to see at Vilna."

The emperor and I then amused ourselves passing in review all the beautiful women at the ball, and there were many beauties at Warsaw. We remarked especially Madame Zamoyska, wife of the president of the senate, who was no longer in her first youth, but who had so well preserved its charms that everyone who saw her for the first time took her for a young girl. She had the most beautiful eyes in the world, and a fairy figure.

## Emperor Alexander I.

Among the beautiful women, the charming Princess Maximilian Sàblonowska, *née* Lubominska, was to be reckoned, as fresh as a rose; Princess Dominique Radzivil also, who has since married General Czernischeff; and the three daughters of the marshal of the palace, who were called the three Graces. The eldest of these, who is now Princess Lowiez, danced with such perfection that when Duport came to Warsaw and she wished to take lessons of him, he said he was able to teach her nothing more.

The day before his departure, Alexander did me the honor of coming to say good-bye. With his usual elegant and chivalric politeness he had asked my "permission" without exactly indicating the day. But I was ready at the moment of his Majesty's arrival, as it was the hour when we dined. On entering, the emperor said he had come to thank me for my "kindness" and to beg me always to consider him as an old friend. Those who have not had the happiness of knowing Alexander will perhaps wonder at such language; but in this prince it was the simple expression of politeness and kindness.

His Majesty then said: "We are going to stay here, are we not, and we can go afterwards to *Mamma*?" When we were seated, the emperor asked me if I had been to the parade. I said I had not. He said it was a pity I had not tried to see it; that it was very fine, and that the Austrian general, Count Walmoden, who had been sent to Warsaw by the Emperor Francis, could not admire enough the fine troops which had been organized in so short a time. "And," continued his Majesty, "though I should not wish to break the good understanding

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which exists between us, if necessity required it, I think they would fight well."

The emperor asked me one question for which I was not prepared, and which embarrassed me very much, though I knew that it was inspired by the kind interest which he had shown for me ever since I had had the honor to become acquainted with him. He asked me if there were no projects of marriage for me. "I have spoken of this to your aunt," continued his Majesty, "but she tells me you have refused all the offers that have been made you. You are perfectly right in being particular; but is there no one who will be so fortunate as to suit you? I wish I could see you happily settled in life as you deserve to be." I did as one usually does in such circumstances; I made the stupidest answer in the world. The emperor did not reply, but renewed his invitation for me to come to St. Petersburg. "In case your aunt should not go, could you not induce your sister to make the journey?" I objected that my sister had a numerous family. "Well," said his Majesty, "do you suppose there is a curse on children at St. Petersburg?" I laughed, and explained to him the real ground of my answer, seizing this opportunity to recommend my brother-in-law, Count Gunther of Hildesheim to his Majesty. I said everything good about him that it was possible to say, as can well be believed, and solicited for him the place of vice-governor either of Minsk or of Vilna. Unfortunately these places were just filled; his Majesty regretted it exceedingly. He offered me as an equivalent that of Grodno, but this position would not have suited my brother-in-law.

## Emperor Alexander I.

Nothing could equal the attention with which Alexander listened to all the demands that were made upon him. He put even in his refusals such a kind graciousness and so much interest that it seemed that it was he whom the refusal hurt instead of the person who was refused.

In speaking of the pleasure of serving his Majesty, I told him I had often felt a regret that I was such a useless creature. If I had been a man I could have consecrated my whole life to his service, and could have employed whatever talent I possessed in being useful to him. "Ah! you are wrong to call yourself useless," said the prince; "virtuous conduct assures a noble career to a woman. She can do so much good in the world by the influence of her example. A good woman exerts a charm, so potent that one breathes a better moral atmosphere in her presence, while the woman who is only amiable is always repellent to me."

His Majesty then added a few serious reflections upon the benefits derived from religion, its consolations, and the strength it gives in times of trouble and misfortune. Alexander had doubtless his weaknesses, like many other great men, but his heart was filled with the purest moral and religious sentiments.

When the emperor rose to go I asked permission to call my mother, but his Majesty said he would go up to her and gave me his arm. My mother came to meet the emperor, who chatted with her a few minutes standing, and then made his adieux, renewing his assurances of friendship and remembrance. That good-bye was not for me, as I had the pleasure of seeing him again at a ball at Princess Czartoryska's.

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As the emperor danced more than usual I took the liberty of saying that it was a good deal of fatigue to incur at the moment of departure. "Yes," said his Majesty, "especially as I rose at four o'clock this morning; but it can't be helped. I must try to keep up the life of the ball."

The excellent health of the emperor, which seemed to promise a long life, helped him to bear easily these fatigues, and one of his aides-de-camp, Count Ojarowski, told us that after leaving the ball he had spent the rest of the night in writing, sending off couriers, reading and signing memoranda, and after all this hard work at the moment of his departure, he conversed with the members of his suite with the same freshness of ideas and the same vivacity which he ordinarily showed. It is true that he was hardly in his carriage before he went to sleep, and he did not waken till he was forty miles from Warsaw.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THE year following, when my marriage was agreed upon, according to the custom at the court of Russia I wrote to the grand mistress, Comtesse de Litta,<sup>1</sup> to obtain permission from their Imperial Majesties to marry. M. de Choiseul made the same request at Moscow, where the court passed the winter of 1818. He was presented to the emperor, who spoke with him about his approaching marriage, charged him with compliments for me, and gave him permission to return to France to fulfil his duties there as a peer of the realm. I did not think it necessary to write directly to the emperor on that occasion. But the same year, Alexander being at Warsaw, and having met my mother, he deigned to tell her that he had offered up prayers for my happiness and that I had his best wishes. His Majesty added that he feared, not having received any direct news from me, that I had been offended because he had sent me his compliments by a Jew (it was the same who had carried a letter from me to my father in 1812). He came to Vilna in my absence. He had received an order, if I gave him a letter to his

<sup>1</sup> Comtesse de Litta, *née* Engelhardt, was a niece of Prince Potemkin. She once shone as a celebrated beauty at the court of Catherine II. She was first married to Count Scavrowsky, who was Russian ambassador at Naples. When a widow she became acquainted with Count Litta, a commander of the Order of Malta, who had first won fame as admiral of the Russian fleet, and subsequently became Lord High Chamberlain of the court of Alexander.

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Majesty, to bring it to him at Warsaw. A few months later, finding that I was at Vilna, this Jew came to tell me he was going to rejoin the emperor at Minsk, and asked me for a letter for his Majesty. I wrote in consequence that the Israelite, the bearer of the gracious remembrance of my sovereign, had seemed a very welcome messenger. I added that I was about to leave for France, and that the remembrance of the kindness with which his Majesty had honored me would follow me to that country and continue there to add to my happiness.

The Jew returned soon and brought me the gracious answer which I transcribe here.

I am very happy, madame, to be authorized to offer you in writing my most sincere thanks for the charming letter which I have just received from you and which has given me great pleasure. My wishes for your happiness are only too natural at a time like that of your marriage. Allow me to repeat them again as well as for the journey you are about to undertake. May Providence guide your footsteps and protect you wherever you may go. Will you keep a place for me in your memory and accept the homage of respectful attachment which I owe you.

ALEXANDER.

This letter, written by his own hand, and a very good hand it was, was for me in France like a talisman against the intolerant prejudices and the malicious false reports. A short time after my arrival in that country, after the first illusion was dissipated, I began to recognize the truth of the picture which Alexander had drawn in strong lines, which at the time had seemed to me to be too highly colored.



## Emperor Alexander I.

I could not help comparing this cold egoism, this icy indifference which reigns in Parisian society, the artificial necessities born of frivolity, the insatiable desires of cupidity, the antagonism of political opinions, and the circumscribed etiquette of the court with that affectionate and friendly good-heartedness (to use an old-fashioned word) which is so natural to the Russians and Poles. Each day made the contrast more bitter to me.

Although I greatly desired to leave France, yet I wished to leave it in a manner honorable to M. de C. They spoke of naming him for the embassy to Russia, and the choice of ambassador was subject to the approval of the Emperor Alexander. M. de C., having no one in the ministry of sufficient influence to place his name on the list, consented that I should write to the emperor and ask for that place, though it was less gratifying to our *amour propre* than to the feelings of our hearts to approach his august person in this way. When my letter reached its destination, M. de La Ferronnays<sup>1</sup> had just been appointed ambassador to Russia, a choice which could not be otherwise than universally approved. In 1820 I made a journey to Lithuania, and M. de C. being engaged in defending himself against a very unjust lawsuit, I decided to go to Warsaw where his Majesty

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Louis Augusta Ferron, Count Ferronnays (born 1777, died 1842). While Louis XVIII. was living in exile, the count was interested in his cause, and in 1815 Louis gave him a peerage. In 1817 he was ambassador to the court of Denmark, whence he was promoted to St. Petersburg. There he became a favorite with Alexander and was intrusted with important diplomatic missions. He was recalled in 1828 by Charles X., and at the special request of the Sacred College the count was appointed ambassador to Rome.

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was at that time, and ask justice and protection from him.

I saw the emperor at a ball at Marshal de La Diette's and as he was not aware of my arrival, on seeing me he showed the most amiable surprise, and proved his continued interest by coming to see me the day after, in the morning, calling my attention himself to this eagerness, which filled me with the deepest gratitude. I received his Majesty in my mother's drawing-room, and the emperor asked me if I was not occupying my old rooms on the ground-floor, fearing that he had disturbed my mother. Then he expressed his regret at not having been able to grant the request which I had made of him for M. de C. "Your letter," said the emperor, "was a long time in reaching me; I did not receive it until after M. de La Ferronays had been nominated for the place. Besides, upon my first visit to Paris, I had already given my word to the king, who had asked me if M. de La Ferronays would suit me for ambassador to St. Petersburg, and when they sent me a list, it was impossible not to choose from among the names that it contained M. de La Ferronays, whom I had known formerly during his emigration, and who is a very good man."

The emperor then asked me a number of questions concerning my sojourn in France, my new family relations, and so forth. He asked me if I was happy, and said some very pleasant things about M. de C. I answered his Majesty that the antagonism of political parties in France made trouble and bitterness, not only in society but in families.

"What do the French want?" asked Alexander.

## Emperor Alexander I.

"They have everything to make a people happy; Heaven has given them a beautiful country, and a climate favorable to all kinds of products. They enjoy as much liberty as it is reasonably possible for them to have, and, alas, they are not content!"

When I spoke of the liberal party — "Oh, that is a name they give themselves, a kind of mantle with which to cover their audacious designs. There is nothing less liberal in the true acceptance of the word than this demagogue party in France. You belong," continued the emperor, "by your marriage and by your family connections to the most distinguished Parisian society. Among them all there are those doubtless who think rightly, but there are also firebrands which —" (I guessed the idea of the emperor, but I kept silence.) "I urged and conjured them to act firmly in the beginning of the restoration of the monarchy; but they would not believe me, and they see to-day the sad results in the tragic death of the Duc de Berri. This event is the more deplorable as the character of the duke, which had changed to his advantage, began to give great hopes." Alexander attributed this terrible event and all the misfortunes of France in general to the influence of M. Decazes over Louis XVIII. He admired M. de Richelieu very much, and hoped he would remain in the ministry. The emperor spoke of *Monsieur*, the brother of the king, now his Majesty Charles X., with great esteem, saying that the character of this prince had been tried in the school of adversity. He praised also the courage of the Duchesse de Berri, and said he awaited with impatience the desired event which would tranquillize France and

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all Europe. Alexander seemed disturbed, and gave me to understand that he was not satisfied with the last news from France.

The emperor having asked me why M. de C. had not accompanied me to Warsaw, I explained the annoying affair which had prevented him from doing homage at the feet of his Majesty, and I took the opportunity to speak of the lawsuit. His Majesty asked me to give him a few notes relating to the case, assuring me that he would be my attorney with pleasure. When I attempted to express my gratitude for his kindness, he said that I owed him none at all, and that there was no merit in rendering me justice.

I made a short memorandum of the case, but I did not know how to convey it to the emperor. I hoped to speak to him at the ball given at the viceroy's, but I arrived so late, on account of the crowd of carriages which formed in line before the door, that the emperor was retiring as I entered the ball-room, and he did not see me. The next morning just as I was relating my disappointment to my mother, a servant from the court was announced, who came from his Majesty to ask news of me and to inquire if I was ill, as the emperor had not seen me at the ball! What a kind attention was this, dictated only by a sentiment of good-feeling.

As I proposed to stay only a few days at Warsaw, his Majesty, learning that I was on the eve of my departure, deigned to come and receive my respectful adieux, saying that he had hoped that I would prolong my stay at Warsaw until the term fixed for his Majesty's own departure, twelve days later, when he was to go to the conference of Troppan in Silesia.

## Emperor Alexander I.

I answered that I had promised M. de C. to return at a fixed time, and that I always kept my word. I presented my memorandum to his Majesty, who commenced to read it at once, then suddenly stopping he said, "It is not very polite to read in presence of ladies, I believe." I answered that on the part of a sovereign it was, on the contrary, a favor, as it was a proof that he really wished to understand the question presented to his judgment.

After the emperor had read the notes he placed the paper under his uniform, saying that he liked my handwriting very much, and that I could be quite tranquil, he would be my advocate. "And never could a cause be placed in better hands!" I exclaimed. "Where could one hope to find justice if not in the heart of our beloved sovereign?"

My mother asked permission to read a passage from a letter from her sister Madame de Radzivil, who was in the country and who charged her with her *adorations*. The emperor received this homage with his usual modesty, saying that he was always sensible of the kindnesses offered him. His Majesty then spoke to us of the marriage of his august brother Duke Constantine, which took place that year.

"I had to overcome many obstacles," he said, "to assure my brother's happiness, but finally he is happy in the right way. I did not like his other way of being happy," added the prince, with a smile. He praised the character of the princess and her angelic sweetness.

His Majesty wished to know if M. de C., aside from his duties as a peer, had no other occupation, either

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military or civil. I seized the opportunity to ask a new favor for M. de C. Obligated to live in France, and possessing nothing there; having estates in Russia laden with heavy charges and with a large number of relatives to maintain, he lacked the means necessary not only to keep up a state suitable to his rank, but to provide for the simple necessities of life. After having solicited without success some place in the government, he hoped to obtain one in Russia through influence brought to bear upon M. de Richelieu. In begging his Majesty to give me a favorable word to his ambassador at Paris, I said how happy I should be to feel myself under his protection even in France, and to owe to him perhaps all the prosperity which I might there enjoy.

Alexander answered that he should be glad to contribute to it and that he was going to give me a letter longer than my memory.

After the emperor had left us, my mother and I talked of the goodness of "that angel" and a feeling of tenderness mingled with sadness came over us which I now regard as a presentiment only too true. We thought that beings so good and so perfect do not remain long on the earth, because heaven always hastens to reclaim those who belong there.

The same day, seeing the emperor pass rapidly in an open calèche, my mother said: "Really it was very foolish for us to give ourselves trouble on that subject. He is young and enjoys such perfect health. God will preserve him;" and we laughed at our fears.

Yet one found no longer in Alexander that frank gaiety which had formerly distinguished him. He



GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE.





## Emperor Alexander I.

seemed discontented with the Polish government, with the business done by the diet, with the expenses, which exceeded the means of the State. He seemed to seek solitude. Often, without giving notice to any of his retinue, he went alone to walk in the environs of Warsaw and had his dinner brought there. Nevertheless he enjoyed good health; his prestige in Russia and in Europe remained the same — always preponderant.

Soon after I returned to Lithuania I received a despatch from the court containing a letter for the Russian ambassador at Paris, inclosing a copy for me. I had the satisfaction to learn at the same time that on account of an express recommendation from his Majesty the lawsuit had been arrested.

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## CHAPTER XXV

WHEN I returned to France a great event was agitating the public mind, which promised to cause important changes in Europe and perhaps bring back the times of the crusades and reawaken the spirit of chivalry. I speak of the Greeks and those heroic efforts which called forth not only the interest of the religious world, but the enthusiasm of all lovers of the beautiful, of the marvellous, and of all that awakens and exalts the imagination by the charm of the memories connected with that land once so illustrious.

It was expected that the Emperor Alexander, as the head of the Greek Church in Russia, would declare himself the protector of his brethren in religion, and that he could not resist the desire to succor the Greeks, expel the Turks from Europe, and make himself master of the Grecian peninsula.

I own that, without thinking of other considerations, in my heart I wished for him this new glory, added to all that he had already won. But the policy of the sovereigns of Europe took another view of the subject. In this desire and effort of the Greeks to throw off the shameful yoke which weighed upon them and to recover a just independence, a dangerous revolutionary spirit was seen, the same which for forty years had been working to undermine the thrones of Europe, and to overthrow the powers established by law and by divine sanction. The

## Emperor Alexander I.

Greeks were abandoned, and the Emperor Alexander was obliged to renounce all those personal advantages, and the glory which such a noble enterprise promised, that the peace of Europe and that equilibrium, of which he himself held the balance, might be maintained.

France had her own reasons for anxiety. Spain, her neighbor and ally, on the eve of a bloody and destructive revolution, attracted the attention of Europe and particularly the solicitude of the French government.

In the spring of 1822 I made a journey to Vilna to make arrangements with my family about my fortune. The emperor came there to review an army corps of sixty thousand men. He arrived on the second of June, traversed the boulevard the entire length of Vilna, and struck by the want of enthusiasm in the inhabitants, he said afterwards to Princess Troubetzka that they would never see him again at Vilna.

The next day, surrounded by his three august brothers, he was present at a brilliant review on the plains of Werki.

Learning that I was at Vilna the emperor expressed his pleasure, and sent to ask if he would disturb me by coming to see me. I shall never forget how my French servant (to whom I had given a lesson how to receive the emperor, when his Majesty inquired if I was at home) answered, "Oui, monsieur."

Alexander immediately asked me a few questions about my child, asking me why I had not brought him with me. I answered that I was afraid of exposing him to the fatigue of such a long journey (he was only six months old); and that my greatest regret

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in the midst of the joy I felt in seeing my sovereign again was in not being able to place my child at his feet. The emperor, seeing how I was moved in speaking to him, said in a tone of real feeling: "Ah! I understand the pain you felt in leaving him." His Majesty deigned to remember M. de C.; I said he was obliged to be present at the sittings of the Chamber of Peers and had not been able to accompany me; and I added, "I really fear your Majesty is surprised to see me travel thus, always alone, yet my whole desire as well as my ambition is to preserve the esteem with which your Majesty has honored me." Alexander assured me that neither *time* nor *absence* nor *distance* could change the feelings of esteem which he entertained for me.

His Majesty wished to know the obstacles which had prevented the baptism of my child from taking place at Paris. (He was to have been named for the emperor.) I related what had taken place at that time, and frankly avowed that it had been my own fault. After the birth of my son I had written to the Emperor Alexander to tell him that a *subject had been born to him in France*, and to ask him, not out of vanity but for the future good of my child, to stand sponsor for him. The emperor, with his usual kindness, consented to grant me this favor, sent a handsome present, and charged Count Schouvaloff, who was then in Paris, to represent him in the ceremony, as I had asked in my letter to his Majesty that the choice might fall upon a good and true Russian, and not upon the ambassador, whom I could not consider as such. It is just that which caused the opposition on the part of the French clergy, opposition which

## Emperor Alexander I.

would not have taken place if the person named by the emperor had been of the Roman Catholic Church. The emperor assured me that, since the misunderstanding arose out of religious zeal, he saw no reason to be offended at what had happened.

The emperor asked me what business had brought me to Vilna, and if it was the lawsuit for which I had given him the memorandum at Warsaw. He remembered that still after two years. In general the memory of this prince was prodigious; however, it was in fault that day. "With what pleasure," said he, "do I see you again in this room where I used to see you! Here is the same sofa where you used to sit near the same round table." He looked around for the piano — it was not there. I was embarrassed, for it was my father's apartment, which I was occupying in his absence; and it was not that one in which I had received his Majesty several times, for my father had changed his residence to another house. I did not reply. Thus the poor princes are often deceived in the smallest matters, even by those who are the most devoted to them.

The emperor then touched on graver subjects. He spoke with interest of the position of France and approved the change of the ministry, which gave him occasion to speak of M. Decazes and M. de Talleyrand. He said that France owed much to M. de Richelieu, for it was he who obtained, at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, the recall of the allied troops out of France. The emperor said that his talent and intelligence might have been greater, but that he was an honest man full of zeal for his country, which in like circumstances was rare.

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The Emperor Alexander seemed to have an exaggerated idea of the ability and oratorical talent of the demagogue party, as he styled the party on the left in the House of Deputies. I suggested that the royalists would not yield to them on that point. At each orator on the left that his Majesty named, I cited one on the right; to General Foy<sup>1</sup> and Benjamin Constant I opposed Castelbajac<sup>2</sup> and Labourdonnaie and Dalot. I cannot say that I succeeded in convincing Alexander, for he seemed greatly struck by the influence which such talent as the opposition possessed could exert in France upon the mind of the nation. It was easy to see from the language of the emperor that he had received disturbing reports of what was happening in France. I ventured to say that these troubles, incited by discontented and restless minds, could not destroy the tranquillity of the mass of the French nation, which, after all the disturbances it had suffered, wished for nothing now so much as peace and repose.

I had brought with me a work which had just appeared, upon the revolution in Piedmont. I spoke

<sup>1</sup> Maximilian Sebastian Foy (born 1775, died 1825). A French general and orator. He was one of those republicans who opposed the assumption of imperial power by Napoleon. In 1819 he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, where he immediately took his place in the front rank of orators. His past life, his noble character, and his persuasive manner gave him great influence, which he employed in favor of liberal and constitutional government.

<sup>2</sup> Marie Barthélemy, Viscount de Castelbajac (born 1776, died 1868), a French politician and orator. He served some time in the army under Condé. Upon the restoration of the Bourbons he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, where he was a warm partisan of the interests of the aristocracy. He was elevated to the peerage in 1830.

## Emperor Alexander I.

of it to his Majesty, who had already read it and praised it much, and told me something which I did not know, that the foundation of this political romance was a real adventure.

The emperor then spoke of the affairs in Spain. "I see only one way to end them," he said, "that is by fighting. Spain is the hot-bed of revolution, and for the peace of other nations that dangerous element must be suppressed and destroyed. I should like to volunteer in such a cause, but how reach Spain without passing through France? And would there not be danger in interesting France in such a war?"

I did not venture any observation on such important questions, but changing the subject I said: "Lately in Paris we supposed your Majesty to be already in Constantinople."

"Yes," said Alexander, smiling, "they wanted me to teach that maniac some of my principles, but nothing in the world shall make me go."

"Sire, your Majesty has given an example of unparalleled moderation and firmness in not allowing yourself to be led by a temptation, which must have been strong, to make such a fine conquest and to deliver Greece from the yoke which oppresses her."

"No project for enlarging my territories enters into any of my political views," said his Majesty; "their extent is already so great as to excite the attention and envy of the other powers of Europe. I cannot, and I will not, favor the insurrection of the Greeks, because that step would be contrary to the system which I have adopted, and it would certainly destroy that peace which I have tried so hard to establish, a peace so necessary to Europe.

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"Moreover, in giving an ear to the voice of humanity and that of my own heart, which calls me to the help of the Greeks, I should only engage in an enterprise which would augment the number of victims. The least step that my armies would make in their favor would be the signal for a general massacre. You know that the Greek population is scattered over the Peninsula of Morea, which would be overrun by the Turks before the Russians could reach Constantinople."

After this grave but interesting conversation the emperor, changing the subject, began to make sarcastic remarks about the partiality of the King of France for a certain lady of his court.<sup>1</sup> "How can Louis XVIII., at sixty-seven years of age, have mistresses?"

"But sire," I said, "it is only a platonic affection."

"I do not admit even that," said he. "I am forty-five, while the king is sixty-seven, and I have long given up that sort of thing."

In fact for several years Alexander had led a most exemplary life, and Madame N. had for a long time been banished to Paris.

The emperor asked me if I had seen his soldiers at the review. I answered that I had seen some giants. Really, the men and horses in the army appeared to me perfectly gigantic, the horses espe-

<sup>1</sup> Zoé Victoire Talon, Countess of Cayla (born 1784, died 1852), was a friend of Queen Hortense. Her husband, with whom she lived unhappily and from whom she was ultimately divorced, was a member of the little court of the Condés. She was young, amiable, and intelligent when she sought Louis XVIII.'s protection against Count du Cayla, who was seeking to remove her children from her care, and the king immediately became fascinated with her.



## Emperor Alexander I.

cially, which were too heavy and too large for cavalry. His Majesty asked me why in all my journeys I had never come to St. Petersburg. I said that that was my favorite dream, one of my castles in Spain.

"Why only a castle in Spain?" said Alexander. "What do you find so extraordinary in making that journey, you who travel with the rapidity of a courier?" (I had come from Paris to Vilna in fourteen days!) "For you, it is like going from Vilkomir to Towiany."

"Not quite, sire," I replied; "but I will do my best to go there next year, and it will be the happiest day of my life when I see my husband and my child at your Majesty's feet."

"We cannot boast," said Alexander modestly, "that St. Petersburg compares with Paris in the beauty and resources of all sorts which that great capital offers, but we will endeavor to give you as good a reception as we can."

I showed his Majesty a portrait of my child. He looked at it a long time and found him pretty. He then asked me questions about my father and about the marriages of my brothers; in fine, his attentive and thoughtful kindness was forgetful of nothing which could be interesting to me. In taking leave, Alexander deigned to renew his assurance of friendship, and begged me always to be *good* and *gracious* to him. "Be assured," added he, "that the friendship which you inspire in me is pure and disinterested."

His Majesty deigned to accept a ball which was given him by the marshal of the nobility at Vilna, at the town hall. Every one remarked that the emperor, in spite of his calling himself *an old soldier*,

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did not look more than thirty years old. He was still remarkably handsome, and had a surprising brilliancy. His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine, while dancing with me, asked if it was some business which had brought me to Vilna. "It is doubtless some suit in the courts," said he; "you Poles do nothing else;" which unfortunately is only too true.

It was at this ball that I had the honor of seeing the Grand Duke Nicholas for the first time (now the emperor). I was struck by the perfect dignity and elegance of his speech and manners, and I must say that I found in the face of this young man something more imperial still than in that of the emperor himself, which, however, was handsomer.

His Majesty said good-bye to me at the ball, as he was to leave very early the next morning. I agreed with several of my friends, Countess Lopacinska, Countess Plater, and others, to meet on the boulevard where he was to pass. The emperor always travelled in an open calèche; he recognized us and bowed. He was going then to the Congress of Verona, where he had very interesting conferences with M. de Montmorency and M. de Chateaubriand, both men capable of understanding and appreciating this prince, and who returned to Paris delighted with his intelligence, his graciousness, and above all with his noble way of thinking. M. de Montmorency particularly gave a strong proof of his devotion by resigning his place in the ministry when he saw the impossibility of carrying out the plan and ideas which Alexander had laid before him, and which his reason had led him to approve.

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The emperor on his return from Verona passed again through Warsaw, where he honored my mother with a visit and conversed with her a long time on the merits of MM. de Montmorency and de Chateaubriand. He charged my mother with remembrances for me.

At the Congress of Verona Alexander proposed to the French government to send his army at his own cost to the help of Spain, without the participation of France. This proposition, generous in itself, caused great anxiety in France, especially in Paris. A feeble and timid party, at the head of which was M. de Talleyrand, whose quarters were about the Faubourg Saint-Germain, were of the opinion that the offer should be accepted without hesitation, and that they ought to be only too glad that the Emperor of Russia was willing to undertake an enterprise so dangerous to France. M. de Talleyrand made a speech in which he endeavored to prove that Spain had once already brought disaster to France; that he had at that time predicted to the government the fatal results of the Peninsular war; that he considered it his duty to recall them again in the present circumstances.

The Duc de Fitz-James,<sup>1</sup> one of the most distinguished orators in the Chamber of Peers, declaimed loudly against this speech and endeavored to refute it. The strongest and boldest party declared that it would be an ineffaceable stain upon the honor of

<sup>1</sup> Édouard, Duke Fitz-James (born 1776, died 1838) was the great grandson of the Duke of Berwick, who was the natural son of James II. The Duke was an ardent Bourbon; he was first aide-de-camp to Charles X.

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France to allow the intervention of a foreign power in the affairs of Spain, which were for France "family matters."

This important question was discussed with much interest and warmth in all the salons of Paris, and I heard many young and beautiful women express themselves on that subject with much eloquence and true patriotism. Finally, Louis XVIII. decided the question with his usual sagacity. He understood how to reconcile French honor and that of the crown with the tranquillity of France, by the noble confidence he placed in the valor and fidelity of his armies, and by choosing for their commander that august prince who was destined to add new laurels to those which had adorned his ancestors.<sup>1</sup> It is well known how, as far as military success is concerned, the result realized and even surpassed the hopes of the French and the expectations of Europe.

<sup>1</sup> Duc d'Angoulême (born 1775, died 1844), son of Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X. of France.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXVI

THE Emperor Alexander, who had always enjoyed the best of health, fell dangerously ill in the winter of 1824. Family troubles and anxieties which his lively sensibilities probably exaggerated, added to a sudden cold, developed a violent malady which alarmed the royal family and the entire capital. For some time the emperor had adopted the habit of retiring often, even in winter, to his favorite residence Czarsko-Sélo. He had his ministers come there, and led a very solitary life, without any other diversion than his long walks in the park, which was two or three leagues in extent. One day (about the time of the marriage of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michel) his Majesty had taken a longer walk than usual. He returned to the château seized with a chill, and had his dinner brought to his bedroom; but he could not eat anything, and very soon erysipelas developed itself in the leg with frightful rapidity; then followed fever and delirium.

The emperor was transported at once in a closed sleigh to St. Petersburg, where the medical faculty were assembled, and fearing gangrene, which began to manifest itself, they advised amputating the leg. However, the active remedies used having produced the desired effect, the excellent constitution of the emperor soon led to a happy convalescence. The first time that Alexander showed himself in the streets of St. Petersburg after this illness, the people

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everywhere on his route threw themselves on their knees, giving touching signs of great joy, and thanking Heaven for having preserved their father.

This same year I succeeded in carrying out the plan formed so long before, of going to St. Petersburg and there offering my homage and respect to my august sovereign, in that beautiful city which had been his cradle and where stood his throne.

We arrived there in the first days of July, the season when there is no night in those northern regions. During the last stage of our journey from Strelna, a château of the Grand Duke Constantine, whose parks have an extent of three leagues, we drove over a broad road between two rows of *datcha*, or country houses, on one side looking upon the sea, and on the other upon the canals or branches of the Neva. These *datcha* are separated from each other and from the road by gardens, where the white birch predominates, whose pale verdure makes a strong contrast with the dark green of the pines and firs of the North. Vases of flowers dispersed among the trees prolong the remembrance of spring to these inhabitants of the North.

All these residences vary in architecture and beauty. Here, in the midst of a mass of green, you see a Greek temple with its beautiful peristyle and noble steps; farther on there is a Chinese pavilion with its pagodas and silvery tinkling bells; again, you see a Swiss chalet, a modest habitation in appearance, but under an unpretentious exterior is hidden regal luxury; finally, an Italian belvedere raises its elegant proportions above the trees which surround it, forming a picturesque contrast to a Gothic château

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with its battlemented towers. And everywhere in gigantic hot-houses, protected from a humid or icy atmosphere, fruits and flowers grow which nature has adapted to other climes.

In short, a thousand objects manifest tastes as varied as ingenious, and vie with one another to attract the attention of the traveller. The environs of Paris offer nothing, with the exception of the royal palaces, to be compared to the magnificence of the environs of St. Petersburg, where, moreover, all is the work of art. These charming creations, born of fancy and wealth, have been constructed upon a sterile soil which was formerly only a vast marsh.

I was equally struck with the imposing and symmetrical beauty of St. Petersburg, whose streets are very broad, planted with trees, and embellished with pavements of slate. The houses, without having the imposing appearance of the handsome hotels of Paris, are distinguished by the elegance of the windows, each consisting of a single pane of glass, and by the freshness of their ornaments. One sees also at St. Petersburg a great number of remarkable edifices.

All the best society had gone for the summer to their datcha. The small number of the inhabitants who remained in the city, and nearly all of them in the national costume, gave the capital a kind of Asiatic appearance which contrasted singularly with the perfectly European elegance of the buildings. Very few equipages were to be seen in the long broad streets or on the immense quays. A few English carriages, or carriages made after English models, to which were harnessed, Russian fashion,



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four horses with long manes, were driven very fast by bearded coachmen and little noisy postilions. Very few pedestrians were to be seen upon the beautiful broad pavements.

At night, in the twilight, which resembles neither the light of the day nor that of the moon, but spreads a kind of magic transparency over everything, this beautiful deserted city looked like a vast panorama.

On arriving at St. Petersburg we stopped for a few days at the *hôtel d'Angleterre*, situated in Admiralty Place, near the Winter Palace, the residence of his Imperial Majesty. This palace is built in the ancient style of French architecture. The Admiralty, nearly opposite, is a superb edifice, built by the Emperor Alexander; for if Peter the Great founded St. Petersburg, it is Alexander who has beautified it. This prince had a fine taste for architecture and was very fond of building.

A promenade planted with several rows of lindentrees extends from the imperial palace the whole length of the Admiralty buildings, and upon the vast space between this avenue and the Neva a hundred thousand soldiers of the infantry can be reviewed. The river is bordered by a quay of rose-colored granite. The Neva, so majestic when calm, so terrible in a storm, the waters of which are a deep blue, is covered for a part of the year with vessels bearing the colors of all the nations of the world. There are also beautiful yachts darting hither and thither in their rapid navigation. The Neva is at the same time the ornament, the glory, the wealth, and the terror of St. Petersburg.

The Emperor Alexander was not at St. Petersburg



## Emperor Alexander I.

when I arrived there. After returning from a journey which he had made through the military stations, his Majesty had gone to be present at the manœuvres, some leagues from the capital, and it was not known when he would return to Czarsko-Sélo. My first homage was therefore addressed to the statue of the great founder of St. Petersburg, — a statue of which so many descriptions have been written that I will spare the reader mine. Then I went to admire the beautiful buildings on the English quay, the Academy, and the Bourse, — an immense building where all the products of the four quarters of the globe are to be found. I visited the superb church of St. Mary of Kazan. The exterior of this church is very admirable, the architecture noble and imposing, and in the interior one's eyes are dazzled by the quantity of gold and silver which the church contains; at this magnificent display one might imagine he had penetrated into the temple of the sun which existed in times past at Lima.

The Gosciny-Devor is a kind of Oriental Bazaar where everything is to be found, from the rich shops of the gold and silver smiths and the jewellers down to those of the simplest artisans. I have never seen even in Paris such a variety of fruits as I saw in the fruit market at St. Petersburg; there was every kind, and among them enormous pineapples at five francs apiece.

There are but two promenades at St. Petersburg; the first is the summer garden, remarkable for its beautiful gilded gates. The second promenade is the Ekaterinoslaf garden, situated a little outside the town, where the people go in crowds on Sundays and

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holidays. The carriages of the rich drive about in the roads of this park, and here the first of May, which is called the beginning of spring at St. Petersburg, is celebrated. I noticed curious contrasts, which were not also pleasing, in the parties gathered about the games, the tea houses, and the Russian mountains. The *moujyk*, the rich merchants of the city, clad in the national costume so becoming to their tall figures, wearing long beards, which gave them an imposing and patriarchal air, walked gravely along accompanied by their wives and daughters dressed in the European fashion. There is not the least bit of taste in the finery of these latter; it is a desperate mixture of Parisian gewgaws oddly thrown together without regard to fashion or becomingness. Then there was a face under a hat loaded with flowers, — the Slavonic face with a flat nose and yellow complexion; and under a beautiful, embroidered dress a horrid pair of badly made shoes. Beside these caricatures, these parodies of Parisian elegance, were the nurses in the patrician families, dressed in that costume which makes the ugliest face beautiful, — the *kakochnik*, a gold bonnet covered with stones, very high, giving height to the figure, the silk caftan which shows the proportions so well, and the rich pelisse thrown over the shoulders as a protection against the cold in this changeable climate. This costume is rich, elegant, and graceful. I think if I had the honor to be a sovereign of Russia I should immediately adopt it, and forever abandon the capricious fashions which Paris imposes upon the whole world. This example would be followed by the court, the town, and the empire, and would be the same as a sumptuary law; for it is

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acknowledged that a costume, however rich it may be, which is not subject to the changes of fashion, costs much less than that which requires constant change.

I visited the interior of the Winter Palace. The gallery of pictures contains many *chefs-d'œuvre* of the great masters; and had recently been greatly enriched by a beautiful collection which the Emperor Alexander had acquired at Malmaison at the death of the Empress Josephine. The collection of medals which formerly belonged to the house of Orléans is also very valuable.

I saw in the Winter Garden at the Hermitage the descendants of the pigeons fed by the hand of Catherine II. We made several expeditions outside town, to Kamenoy-Ostroff, where the daughter-in-law of M. de C. lived, Countess Edward de C., *née* Princess Galitzin, — a woman distinguished alike for her beauty and for her amiable and sweet character. Kamenoy-Ostroff is about a league from the city. To reach it you must cross the Neva on a bridge of boats. The name signifies "*The Isle of Stones.*" There are numerous datcha here, all very attractive, scattered about in a wood surrounded by water, and separated by canals, arms of the Neva and of the little river Noire. These waters form numerous islands, which are united by bridges. The château and gardens, which are not very extensive, are situated near a branch of the Neva where the imperial yacht lies. Not far off and near the river is the beautiful mansion of Greek architecture belonging to M. Laval, and those of M. Narishkin, Count Strogonoff, and others; it would be impossible for me to mention them all.

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I can only say that the beauty of these waters and the freshness of the verdure make the spot a retreat of veritable enchantment during two or three months of the year.

The island Krestofsky is a large public garden similar to the old Jardin Beaujou in the Champs-Élysées. Near it is the island Yelagine, where stands the château belonging to the dowager empress. The elegant form and the pure white of this palace, built in the midst of flowering fields surrounded by water, make it appear like a lily standing in the midst of a mass of roses in a crystal vase.

I saw also the palace and gardens of Torride, that ostentatious creation of the pompous Potemkin. The ball-room, which is also a winter garden, is of gigantic dimensions. They were working on decorations and preparing for fireworks for the reception of her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Marie, Princess of Orange.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXVII

HAVING heard of his Majesty's return to Czarsko-Sélo, I resolved to go there, although a little discouraged by what I had heard, that he never accorded an audience in the country. I was told that even by writing it was difficult to reach the emperor, as it was doubtful if the letter would be given him. Besides the natural desire to offer homage to my sovereign, I had a number of petitions to make to him; among others that of having my child christened at last. I started off with a feeling of timidity and discouragement, and if I could have avoided the journey I would have done so gladly.

Czarsko-Sélo is three leagues from St. Petersburg. I stopped at an inn called the French Restaurant, where I had for myself and my maids only one small, badly furnished chamber. The host, greatly astonished that I was not enchanted with my lodgings, said that it was the same that the French ambassador had when he came to Czarsko-Sélo. I decided in the evening to go and obtain some information from Countess Ojarowska, wife of his Majesty's general aide-de-camp, whom I had known for a long time, a very obliging and amiable woman, and who was one of my compatriots.

My friends lived in the park. I passed in front of the palace, an immense edifice in the old French style, overloaded with sculpture, gildings, and cupolas. It seemed to be deserted. There were no sentinels

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on duty in the court. This imperial solitude<sup>1</sup> inspired in me melancholy reflections. "No," I said to myself, "the Emperor Alexander of St. Petersburg is no longer the Emperor Alexander of Towiany, of Vilna, of Warsaw. So it is with princes.

"With what joy, with what ardor did I receive his Majesty every time he deigned to come and see me! Here, what a difference! Perhaps I shall not obtain even so much as a glass of water in this palace, inhospitable as are all the habitations of the great. Happy are those who never approach them, and more happy still are those who have nothing to ask of them."

Occupied with these sad thoughts, I walked slowly along without being distracted even by the noise of passing carriages, until I arrived at the Chinese village. This is a collection of pretty houses, twenty or more in number, built in the Chinese style, which serve as dwellings for his Majesty's aides-de-camp. Each one of these gentlemen has his house, his stable, his conservatory, and his garden. In the centre of this village built in the form of a star, is a pavilion surrounded by poplar trees, where these gentlemen, the aides-de-camp, give parties, balls, and concerts. That part of the park around the village, — the bridges, trellises, kiosks, pagodas, etc., — is all in strict Chinese style, and is only a point in the immensity of the park.

General Ojarowski and his wife received me very cordially. They believed that the emperor would be a number of days still at the reviews. However, having sent to the palace and learning that his Majesty was to pass the night there, the general

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advised me to go early in the morning with his wife into the park, saying that it was the only way of meeting the emperor, who walked there every morning. The idea of pursuing the emperor over a park several leagues in extent seemed strange to me; however, I had to submit, in spite of the desire I had to return immediately to St. Petersburg. Count O. insisted on conducting me back to the inn. In passing through an avenue I perceived in a transverse alley an officer in undress uniform. (This was the dress adopted by the court when in the country.) This officer saluted us. I thought I recognized the emperor, but he seemed to me slenderer, and it was dark in the avenues. I said nothing, but the little nephew of the general cried out suddenly, "There is the emperor!" Madame O. said: "It is your fortunate star which brings him, for he never walks in the park at this hour." Then she and I retraced our steps. When the emperor saw us coming towards him he also advanced, and when he recognized me he exclaimed in great surprise: "Is it possible that it is you? How long have you been here?" Upon my reply, he reproached me for not treating him as a friend, in not letting him know of my arrival by a word, for having made him lose a fortnight; and he used many other kind expressions, which were so natural to this prince. I excused myself by saying I did not wish to importune his Majesty, knowing that he was at the manœuvres. "I would have made other arrangements," answered the emperor. He received the respectful homage which my mother had charged me to lay at his feet, with his usual kindness, inquired with interest about her health, and

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asked if her rooms were still filled with pictures and birds. His Majesty asked me where I lodged, and said: "You must be horribly uncomfortable in that inn. Let me offer you hospitality. I can answer for it, you will be more comfortable than down there." I accepted with the thankfulness befitting an act of courtesy so kind and so unexpected.

His Majesty left us to have rooms prepared for me and to send me a "guide." Then I returned to the inn with Madame O., delighted at this unexpected meeting, and relieved of the fear of not finding the emperor so favorably disposed toward me as formerly. I found him on the contrary more gracious, if possible, and full of that incomparable kindness which ought to have attached all to him, but for their lack of gratitude.

On returning to the inn I retired immediately, not thinking that I was to be moved the same evening to the palace. Hardly was I in bed when the guide and a carriage arrived to fetch me. The apartment, the supper, all was ready except me. The next morning at 7 o'clock the emperor's first *valet de chambre* was at my door with one of those light, elegant carriages which were used in driving about the park, to which two superb horses were harnessed. I dressed in haste and started with my child.

I was driven to the Palace Alexander, so called because it had been built for that prince by the order of the Empress Catherine, according to the design and plans of an excellent Italian architect. This palace is remarkable for the elegance and harmony of its proportions. The ground-floor is generally occupied by the Grand Duke Nicholas and his



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august spouse, but they were not there then. The apartment which they had allotted to me was on the next floor, at the end of a long open gallery, which opened on the dining-room and served as choir for the musicians at the grand dinners. From all the windows I had charming views of the park and the imperial château, which is about a hundred yards from the Alexander Palace. A mass of green which partly covers the edifice leaves in view the five gilt cupolas of the chapel surmounted by brilliant crosses, which in calm weather are reflected in a bit of water clearly defined and surrounded by a verdant lawn.

An elegantly served breakfast, with baskets of rare fruits, was already prepared in my apartment. The *valet de chambre* left me after asking if I had any orders, and if I was satisfied with my rooms. I was absolutely alone in this great palace, with the exception of my child and the domestics of the court, for mine were still at the inn. With the help of the imagination I could have thought myself in fairyland in some enchanted castle.

I descended into the park and soon met General O., who was coming with his wife to see me. They told me that they had seen the emperor and that he had spoken of the christening, saying that he was ready to satisfy my wishes in that respect, and that it was only necessary to fix the day. Chatting thus we approached a new building which the emperor was amusing himself by having built in the park. It was perfectly square and very high, called "*The Tower of the Equestrians*," because there were statues of equestrians placed in niches in the four

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faces of the tower. It was to contain apartments for the young Grand Duke Alexander.

His Majesty, who was watching the workmen, came to meet us, and said graciously that he hoped I was better lodged in my new quarters than at the inn. He asked me why I had not moved the evening before, assuring me that he had lost no time in sending me a guide. I presented my child to the emperor, who laughed heartily at the idea he had formed of him, always calling him the *big soldier*. When I returned to the palace I sent back the post-horses to St. Petersburg, and wrote to M. de C., telling him of the good news of his Majesty and asking him to come and join me.

The emperor's *valet de chambre* came immediately to announce the visit of his Majesty at noon, and in spite of a pouring rain it took place at the hour indicated. His Majesty, with all the hospitality of the most amiable *lord of the manor*, asked me if I was satisfied with my rooms and if they would be sufficient to lodge M. de C. comfortably, adding kindly that M. de C. was his old comrade in arms. Then he asked me if I would prefer to be lodged in the Chinese village, to be nearer Countess O. Nothing but kindness could inspire such perfect and delicate politeness.

Alexander then said that the court was about to remove to Peterhof, and asked me if I would also go there.

Having been informed by my mother of the condition of my affairs, he kindly showed an interest in them. In the short explanation which I made in soliciting a loan from the imperial bank on terms

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more favorable than those allowed by the law, I was obliged to state that M. de C. had divided a part of his property among his children, and I had the rest, with the understanding that I was to pay the debts which he had contracted in carrying out the last wishes of his father. "That is to say that M. de C. has nothing, and you have n't much," said his Majesty. "That is only too true, sire," I replied. The emperor assured me of his constant desire to oblige me, and asked me for a memorandum of the business.

In speaking to his Majesty of the impression which St. Petersburg had made upon me, I praised the beauty of that capital, as one may imagine. "Yes, it is a beautiful city," said he, "but after all there are only walls, and you will not find the society here which you have left at Paris." I took the opportunity to repeat what I had already had the honor of saying to his Majesty, that the society of Paris, divided up by so many interests and differences of opinion, offered little pleasure; that the demon of politics had taken possession of every head in France; that from the cab driver and match vender, the one on his cab and the other on his rounds, there was not one individual who did not believe it to be to his interest to understand, or at least to read, the daily newspaper, especially the *Constitutionnel*; that one heard nothing in the most brilliant salons of Paris but the debates of the two chambers, and the operations of the ministry; finally, that in this conflict of feelings, prejudices, and opinions on matters of such grave interest, the tone of conversation necessarily and unfortunately lost that ease, that grace, that

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Attic flavor which formerly distinguished France from all other nations of Europe.

Before leaving me his Majesty deigned to renew the strongest assurances of his interest and attachment, begging me not to regard what he said as empty words.

General O. and his amiable wife obligingly offered to show us the park of Czarsko-Sélo. The emperor had made the greater part of it, or at least enlarged and beautified it. He had it kept with a care and scrupulous cleanliness which I have seen nowhere else. A thousand workmen are employed every day in sweeping the paths and roads, and in cutting, rolling, and raking the grass, which is most beautiful. A few steps from the palace, and even in the presence of the emperor, you can hear the workmen laughing and singing, and the happiness which they seem to enjoy fills your own mind with a feeling of satisfaction.

The most remarkable buildings in the park are: Windsor Castle, — in small dimensions, but built after the exact model of that of England, in the midst of a dark forest, — the theatre, and the fancy farm. The last was one of the favorite resorts of the Emperor Alexander, offering him interest, exercise, and rural industry. This farm is ornamented with trellises and a pretty pigeon-house in the French style, and contains in its magnificent cowhouses the most beautiful cattle to be found in Europe, cows from the Tyrol, Switzerland, Hungary, Holland, Kalmogonod, and other places, besides a fine flock of merino sheep which graze in the park.

The interior of the farmhouse is Dutch; the walls are of blue *faïence*; the closets containing the farm

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utensils have glass doors. They showed me the account books, magnificently bound, in which his Majesty himself kept the accounts of the produce of the sheep. He was very proud of wearing a uniform of cloth made from their wool.

These simple occupations, which brought the emperor nearer to nature, relaxed his mind from the cares of State. Not far from the farm is the house of the llamas, kept by a man who brought them from Asia. These animals are never allowed to run free, consequently they look sad and feeble. The part of the park which is designed the best is about the lake, whose extent is considerable, and whose depth is sufficient to bear large yachts and the model of a ship. There are charming ruins on its banks after designs by Robert, and the trees are artistically grouped. At the end of the park there is a triumphal arch bearing this inscription in Russian and in French: "To my dear companions in arms."

They showed me a kind of grotto, called Pansilippe. This is a rock in the form of a vault, a caprice of nature, as the ground all about is quite even and flat. They were working on an antique model for a bath-house for the Emperor, or rather they were demolishing it, as it was not large enough to receive an immense basin cut in a solid block of rose granite large enough to swim in.

I visited next the apartments of the palace, — the grand gilded hall where the empress held her audiences; the apartments of the Emperor Alexander, whose many rooms were both magnificent and tasteful. The walls are covered with lapis lazuli, porphyry, and amber; the floors are incrustated with mother of

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pearl and precious woods. The grand open gallery which communicates with the apartment of the empress, and where one has a beautiful view of the lake and the ruins and the fields of flowers, is ornamented with bronze busts, mostly of great men of antiquity. They remind one of chapters of Plutarch; one reads them again on the foreheads of these ancient heroes.

At Czarsko-Sélo the Emperor Alexander lived a simple country life. He had no court and in the absence of the grand marshal the emperor himself kept the accounts of the household expenses. He received his ministers only on certain days of the week. Alexander rose generally at five o'clock, made his toilet, wrote, and then went into the park, where he visited his farm and the new buildings which were being constructed, gave audiences to those who had petitions to present, and who often followed him over the whole park, which was always open, night and day. The emperor always walked alone without distrust, and he had sentinels only at the château and at the Palace of Alexander. On account of his health he was obliged to observe a strict *régime*. He dined alone in his private apartments, and was accustomed to retire early. At the hour of retiring the band of the guards played under his windows; they usually played plaintive airs, which I could hear from my apartment.

The Empress Elizabeth, on her side, lived in strict retirement. She had about her person only one maid of honor, and received no presentations at Czarsko-Sélo. She deigned to make one exception in my favor. I was so fortunate as to have an interview with this princess, which left me truly enthusiastic about her goodness and graciousness. The

## Emperor Alexander I.

empress was then about forty-five years old. Her figure was slight, well proportioned, and of middle height. Her delicate complexion, which, however, had suffered from the harshness of the climate, and the fineness of her features showed still what must have been her attractions in the springtime of life. There was a certain languor in her language and manners, and her expression was intellectual and gentle; her smile was sad and her voice sweet,—in a word, there was something angelic about her as of a creature not made for this world. I shall never forget her cordial reception, and the kind things which she deigned to say about the manner in which she had come to know about me in 1812. She spoke to me about my humble writings, saying she had read them with pleasure, and that she was glad I had chosen historical subjects from a nation in which she took a most lively interest. I answered that such flattering approbation made me very proud, since I had never dared hope for her august approval, or even that my poor productions should be placed before her. Her Majesty then asked me if I had begun another work, and what was the subject of it. I explained the plot of *Nain Politique*, which I had just commenced; her Majesty approved of the plan, and said it offered a double historical interest for France and for Poland, besides describing an epoch which was little known.

Elizabeth spoke of Walter Scott's novels, which she admired with that keenness of perception and clearness of judgment which shone in all she said. This eminently learned princess devoted nearly all her time to French and Russian literature. She questioned me about my travels in France and Germany.



## Historical Memoirs of the

I spoke of the picturesque parts of Germany, especially the banks of the Rhine, where among the beauties of nature were to be found so many ancient monuments, Roman structures, Gothic castles, ruins of the feudal times — “souvenirs of all times,” added the empress, in her gentle manner. These words said more than my whole recital, and I showed by my looks that I understood to what she alluded.

It was impossible to see the Empress Elizabeth even once without feeling for her a respectful attraction; and I said this to her maid of honor, with tears in my eyes, adding: “How happy she deserved to be! I dare not say more.”

My Aunt Radzivil, who was honored with many marks of kindness by the Empress Elizabeth, gave her the surname *The Serene*. This word characterized that princess perfectly. It showed itself even in the letters which she wrote to my aunt.

The empress never went out in the park till toward evening, and then on horseback. There I often saw her riding through the dark avenues, accompanied only by her maid of honor and a groom. There always seemed to be a shade of melancholy about this princess. It was said she avoided walking in the park in the morning for fear of annoying the emperor, but ought she to have had that fear? What a difference would it have made in the happiness of both, if they had been able to understand each other! They seemed to have been made the one for the other; the same goodness, the same gentleness and intellectual power. Yet there seemed to have been one point on which their hearts could not meet. Why is it that death alone has reunited such perfect souls?



# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

I HAD the honor also to be presented to the august mother of Alexander, that princess whose virtues are the example and the glory of her family. The day that I was presented at Pawlowsky, her summer residence, I followed his Majesty and the court of the empress-mother, which was always numerous and brilliant, to a pavilion called *The Roses*, where dinner was served. After dinner her Majesty descended into the garden and cut roses with the English scissors designed for that purpose, distributing them among the ladies. She gave me two, which I have preserved as a souvenir of the day, and of the kindness of this princess.

The majestic height and the beautiful proportions of the empress and her imposing carriage strike the eye at first sight, and inspire a respect accompanied by a kind of timidity. But the kindness which shows itself in every feature restores confidence and fills each heart with a respectful attachment for this sovereign.

The festivities at Peterhof were not to take place that year on account of the departure of her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Alexandra, who was about to embark, to return by sea to Prussia. Still, great crowds of people arrived to see the fountains play, which are very fine. We were lodged at Peterhof in the rooms of the Austrian ambassador, in the

## Historical Memoirs of the

Palace of Alexander, situated in a park, where the foreign ministers are usually lodged when they are admitted to court festivities.

As at Czarsko-Sélo, our table, equipage, etc., were furnished from the court. The servants, very good people who adored their august master, worked by the quarter and changed every week. As what was left over was a perquisite to them, they were very eager to have us eat. They served us tea, chocolate, coffee, and all sorts of cakes in the morning; soon afterwards a second breakfast; dinner at three o'clock, all kinds of ices at dessert and the choicest of wines; tea in the evening, and later supper whether we wanted it or not. Moreover, in the intervals between these meals they would come to ask us if we were not hungry.

On St. Peter's day the imperial family met at the château. It was there that I saw the Grand Duchess Nicholas for the first time, and I was struck by the elegance of her form and the beauty of her tall figure. Surrounded by her ladies in waiting, whom she surpassed by a head, you would have said it was Calypso in the midst of her nymphs.

I had the honor to be presented to this princess, and to the Grand Duchess Michel, who deigned to address a few words to me. The empress-mother received also that day. She asked me how I liked Peterhof. This place has a singularly imposing beauty. The palace, built in the old style, is neither large nor handsome, but from the balcony of the audience hall there is a magnificent view of the gardens, and through the interlacing jets of water, resplendent with the sun's rays or with the brill-

## Emperor Alexander I.

iancy of illumination, one can see the sea covered with vessels coming from or going to Cronstadt.

They show in the park a favorite pavilion of Peter the Great, where he had a little kitchen with all the Dutch utensils. They show to the curious, the dressing-gown and the night-cap of Peter the Great, and even the slippers of Catherine. Opposite the pavilion is a pond, and the old golden carps which Peter the Great used to feed still come at the sound of a bell to get what is thrown to them. Peterhof has a great paper manufactory where they make vellum, and an establishment for cutting the fine stones which are brought from Siberia, such as amethyst, topaz, and malachite.

M. de C. obtained a special audience of the emperor at Peterhof, and a kind reception, which filled him with admiration for that prince. At the moment of dismissing M. de C. the emperor said: "I am sorry to be obliged to leave you, but I am going to accompany my sister-in-law to Oranienbaum, where she embarks to-day for Prussia;" and he asked if he had seen the vessel destined to carry her Imperial Highness. Knowing that his Majesty, as an act of kindness to the Grand Duchess, had had the vessel supplied with every comfort and luxury, M. de C., who had been to see it with me, praised the arrangements to his Majesty, who, fearing the consequences of the long sea voyage, replied: "I have done all that I could to make the voyage less painful, but I cannot prevent seasickness."

This vessel, which had just come from the dock-yard, carried forty-five guns and eight hundred men. The apartments of her Imperial Highness consisted

## Historical Memoirs of the

of seven rooms and a chapel, and were furnished and hung with green silk. A tent was to be set up on deck, where the band was to play. In a word nothing was neglected which could contribute to the pleasure of a sea voyage. The captain, who had already made a voyage round the world, told us he would rather do it again twice than undertake this commission, very honorable without doubt, but the responsibility of which he dreaded.

The court remained only a week at Peterhof. The empress-mother went to the castle of Yelagine and the emperor to St. Petersburg. There I received a note from his Majesty, who wrote to arrange with me the day for the christening. "Do not trouble yourself about me," he wrote. "I am not a novice in this kind of thing."

The baptismal ceremony was a little longer than is customary, as the abbot, M. Lockman, the commander of the chapel of Malta, thought it necessary to read the service in Latin and in French; he added a very good exhortation, addressed to the godfather, the father, and the mother, to persuade them to bring up the child in the principles of religion, in order to preserve in him the gifts which he had just received by the rite of baptism. The emperor looked at me and smiled at the moments critical for the child, who, however, bore the trials of salt and water very well, as the rich dress of the abbot and his deacon, the ornaments of the altar, and the lights were a happy diversion.

After the immersion the emperor himself dried the long curls of the neophyte and addressed a few words of thanks to the abbot, M. Lockman. Then observ-

## Emperor Alexander I.

ing that M. de C. had retired immediately after the ceremony, Alexander rose and went to fetch him, saying he was surprised that M. de C. had not remained; and having brought him back to the salon, he made him sit down in his presence.

The conversation soon turned to politics. His Majesty deprecated the change of ministry in France, attributing it in a great measure to the influence of a certain lady. He showed regret at the retirement of M. de Chateaubriand, and made some sharp observations on the petty and commercial views of Mr. Canning, of whom he didn't think much.

His Majesty was so kind as to ask us to come and take our abode at Czarsko-Sélo again before his departure for Siberia. "And may I not have the pleasure of finding you here on my return," he said, "and of seeing you this winter at St. Petersburg?" In showing our full appreciation of such a kind and gracious invitation, we were obliged to answer that M. de C.'s affairs, and especially his duty, called him back to France.

The emperor spoke of the malady of Louis XVIII., a malady sufficiently grave to cause anxiety for the life of the king. "I hope," said Alexander, "that in any case a change of reign will not bring trouble into France, and that *Monsieur*, who is loved, will know how to use the necessary firmness."

I showed the emperor a ring that my mother had sent me. It had the head of Alexander engraved on a turquoise, and I said it was the most acceptable present she could have made me. The emperor thanked me and said he was greatly indebted to my mother, since the ring would serve to keep his mem-

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ory alive, and he begged me to remember him to my mother.

When his Majesty got into his carriage again the crowd of people who filled the streets sent up those joyous *hurrahs* which the presence of their dearly loved sovereign always called forth. The emperor was about to undertake a two months' journey of seven thousand versts to visit the Ural mountains, where a rich gold mine had been discovered. That part of the empire was unknown to his Majesty, who proposed to travel over all his States to judge for himself of the welfare of his subjects and of the means of encouraging national industry, and to promote commerce by building new roads and channels of communication.

The day of the emperor's departure I had gone early into the park to look at the Tower of the Equestrians. Soon I saw the emperor arrive from the other side. I hastened to take my portfolio and make my retreat, but his Majesty, having seen me, followed me across the wood, saying that I ran so fast he could hardly overtake me. I excused myself for having disturbed him. The emperor asked me to guess what time he had gotten up that morning. "At four o'clock," said I. "No, at half-past three," said he. "I am overwhelmed with work," continued he. "Every year at this time I make a journey in the empire. Ah well! Every year! Yet, as if they expected to see me no more, everybody will make haste to finish his business with me." What a strange presentiment! One year later at the same season Alexander made another journey — and he was seen no more.

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I asked the emperor, knowing that the wound in his leg was open again, if his health did not suffer from such long journeys. "No," he said, "the season is favorable for travelling in those countries, where there is no rain at this time of the year and only slight frosts at night."

Then the emperor said that my business relating to the loan was settled, and expressed his regret that he could not fulfil my other request. M. de C.'s eldest son had been in the service of Russia since his most tender youth, or rather since his childhood, and wished to obtain the place of aide-de-camp to his Majesty, and had begged me to ask for it for him. I had it very much at heart to succeed in this affair, not knowing how difficult it was, and I neglected nothing that could be done to bring about the desired result.

His Majesty said: "I must answer you frankly, as to a person whom I love and respect; it is impossible for me to give this young man, who has never seen one day of military duty, a position which is regarded as the reward of long and active service."

I insisted on the eleven years which my step-son had served.

"Eleven years!" replied Alexander. "What is that? There are many distinguished soldiers in Poland who have served twenty years,—and what service! Men who have been much in war and who have been wounded apply for this place. I cannot, then, without injustice, give it to this young man. Put yourself in my place as doing them this wrong."

I begged his Majesty to put himself for an instant in mine, and to pardon me if I had made an importunate demand.



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"Nothing can be importunate on your part," he replied, and left me, promising me a visit at noon.

When he came he renewed his excuses for having refused me the favor in question. I seized the opportunity to beg him to remember the young man on some other occasion, speaking of his zeal in his Majesty's service. The emperor asked me several questions on the subject which proved his real interest.

Alexander then made me some compliments about my writings. I told him of the little literary war which I had waged for him a few years before, over a worthless work entitled "The Recollections of a French Prisoner." The story seemed to amuse him.

When Alexander was speaking of his journey, I said that to make the tour through all his provinces as far as Kamtschatka would take more than a year, and that the other day M. de C. and I had amused ourselves by making his Majesty take possession of China to round out his empire. "Oh! my empire is already too round, and your idea is very impolitic," said his Majesty. "Russia is already only too large; the great distances between the governments make communication too slow; consequently governmental action is often delayed and disturbed."

The emperor then spoke of the revolution which had just broken out in Portugal. I permitted myself to suggest that it was difficult not to attribute this movement to English policy. The emperor did not reply, but he nodded his head approvingly.

During the conversation, my child, who was playing in the gallery, came every minute to open the door of the salon, and then ran away as soon as I called him. The emperor said the little *châp* was



## Emperor Alexander I.

anxious to see him out of the house, that he might play alone with his mamma. I went to fetch him, and put him on the table near his Majesty, who kissed him and advised me to let him develop naturally and never to try to constrain his natural disposition. Poor prince! how he loved children, and how happy he would have been if he could have kept his own! The Empress Elizabeth had two daughters, who died in their infancy.

I expressed my gratitude to the emperor for the kindnesses which their Imperial Majesties had shown me, and I acknowledged in them a new proof of his great indulgence in my favor.

"You owe nothing except to yourself," replied his Majesty. "The empresses were already advantageously acquainted with you before they saw you."

I had an enormous pineapple on my table, which the emperor had sent me, who every day sent baskets of fruit to the ladies of his acquaintance at Czarsko-Sélo. In speaking of the hot-houses and of the especial taste of the dowager empress for flowers, I said that her Majesty also cultivated young plants that were even more interesting than the beautiful flowers of her gardens. Alexander understood me and replied that the establishments for the young which had been founded by the empress had greatly corrected the morals and had done an enormous amount of good among all classes of the society of St. Petersburg. The emperor adored his mother, and he had a most tender affection for all the members of the imperial family, especially for his brothers, always trying to anticipate their slightest wishes. He was adored by them also.

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His Majesty left me to go and dine at Pawlowsky with the empress-mother. In making his adieux he said: "So you are going back to France; when can we hope to see you again? You see that the journey to St. Petersburg is nothing."

I answered, knowing that his Majesty proposed to come to Warsaw the following year, that I would do my best to come thither also and to have the honor to do him homage. He seemed satisfied, for this prince did not like to be separated from those people in whom he was interested. This reminds me of something he had said to me a few days before: "People always think when I go away that they will never see me again."

When I would have kissed his hand, at the moment when he offered to take mine, he withdrew it quickly, saying that we were old friends enough to kiss each other. I followed the emperor as far as the gallery, expressing the wishes which I would never cease to form for his happiness. At the word "happiness," and as if he did not believe in it, he made a motion whose sad expression struck my heart, and which I shall never forget. He was gone, and I was never to see him again!

I am certain, and many other people have made the same observation, that Alexander entertained the darkest presentiments for a long time before his death. It appears that he was particularly oppressed with them before that last fatal journey to Taganrog. It is said that he could not control his feelings on receiving the adieux of his family and the court; in leaving St. Petersburg he had the carriage stop, and he turned to look once more on that

## Emperor Alexander I.

superb city. The melancholy expression of his countenance seemed to address a sad and last farewell to that place which had seen his birth.

M. de C. and I attributed this sadness to a recent grief which his Majesty had suffered; he had just lost his daughter, a daughter whom he had never recognized and who bore the name of her mother. This interesting young person was attacked by some lung trouble and was brought from Paris to St. Petersburg against the advice of the physicians, but putting faith in certain magnetic charlatans who predicted long life, health, and marriage. Already dying she was betrothed to Count C., who magnetized her according to the orders of the clairvoyants at Paris; and when the magnificent trousseau ordered in Paris arrived (it cost 400,000 francs) this interesting child was dead. The ornaments for the burial and the funeral crown of the virgin replaced the bridal veil and the brilliant jewels which had been destined for days of festivity.

The emperor learned of this cruel event while at the parade. His face in an instant became deathly pale, but he had the courage not to interrupt the drill, and only let these words escape him: "I have received the punishment for my sins."

And who consoled Alexander in this trouble? Who wiped away his tears? It was an angel; it was Elizabeth. Unhappy at having lost her own children, she loved this young girl, and when, in her childhood she met her by chance, she pressed the child to her breast, and sadly sought in her childish features a resemblance to him she loved.

The emperor often went alone to the grave of his

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daughter, and had a monument raised to her memory in the church of Saint Sergius at St. Petersburg.

On the eve of his Majesty's departure General Houvaroff brought me a beautiful diamond agraffe from his august master. I said that, the emperor having certainly forgotten that he had already made me a present on the occasion of the christening, I thought I ought not to accept this; but the general said that my refusal would displease the emperor. So I dared not refuse.

That day, before leaving Czarsko-Sélo I obtained my farewell audience with the Empress Elizabeth. This princess received me with her accustomed gentleness and grace. She knew how to combine the dignity of a sovereign and the refinement of a gifted woman in her conversation. She spoke of the journey of the emperor, saying, "I hope travelling will do the emperor good." This interview was not so long as the preceding one, as the empress was to receive the ministers and Alexander's retinue.

"I trust," said she, "that business or family affairs will soon bring you back to this country;" and she deigned to add that she regretted to have me go. When Elizabeth rose I begged her to drive me from her presence, not having the courage to go myself. I told her that the respectful attachment which I felt for her was a heritage which my Aunt Radzivil had left me, and which I should preserve all my life. Elizabeth expressed her sorrow at the loss of my aunt. "She was good, so charming!" she said. Her Majesty would not allow me to kiss her hand, although I said I did it from attachment as much as out of respect. She bade me kiss her cheek.

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I did not expect to see her again, but in the morning, an hour after the departure of the emperor, who had left Czarsko-Sélo at 6 o'clock, as I was walking in the park with M. de C., we saw in the grand avenue a lady very lightly dressed in spite of the coolness of the morning, with a veil thrown over her head. She was accompanied by a woman whom we did not recognize. M. de C. said, "It is the Empress Elizabeth!"

"What an idea!" I answered. "You know that she never walks in the park at this hour."

I had hardly said these words when the lady coming toward us raised her veil, and I recognized the empress. She addressed us in a few friendly words, saying to M. de C. that she was charmed with having the opportunity to say good-bye to him, and expressed a kind regret that we could not prolong our stay at Czarsko-Sélo.

In speaking of the departure of the emperor she said: "The weather to-day is at least endurable; yesterday the whole day it was too depressing." It was thought that the Empress Elizabeth had no longer any affection for Alexander. As for me I am persuaded to the contrary. Some words which escaped her, the sound of her voice when she spoke of him, proved to me that I was not deceived. Then the death of Elizabeth has proved that she had not ceased to love him, since she could not survive him, and her one hope and desire was to rejoin him whom she mourned.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

THIS last walk in the park at Czarsko-Sélo was filled with sadness. Although the air was soft, the sky was overcast. This beautiful place which I never hoped to see again, seemed to have taken on a melancholy aspect since the departure of the emperor. The signs of approaching autumn are always sad. Taking up a dead leaf which had just fallen, I recalled these lines of Delille: —

“ De moment en moment la feuille sur la terre  
Interrompt en tombant le rêveur solitaire.”

I have always kept that leaf in my book of souvenirs. I was recalling with feelings of deepest gratitude the many proofs of interest and kindness which the Emperor Alexander had shown me during the twelve years that I had known him. As he had said, neither time nor absence had changed his feelings. This good and great prince, who owed me nothing, to whom I was nothing, had made me taste the sweetness of his friendship. Invoking upon him all the blessings of heaven, I said to myself: “ This angel, who knows so well how to sympathize in the sorrows of others (for there was never a family in affliction in St. Petersburg where he did not appear with words of peace, consolation, and piety), this angel who made the happiness of all around him, is not happy himself. He was a father and cannot mourn for his daughter! — his daughter, the one hope of his old

## Emperor Alexander I.

age, still remote, but which will overtake him one day." I was far from foreseeing that his career would be so short and that the end was so near, but I was involuntarily troubled by the sadness of his last farewell.

The day of our departure from Czarsko-Sélo, having asked the empress-mother for a farewell audience, she commanded me with M. de C. to dinner at Pawlowsky. A few minutes before assembling at her Majesty's, I went to visit Princess Lieven, who had brought up the entire imperial family, whom she adored, and of whom we conversed all the time we were together. I dare say our hearts were entirely in unison at that time.

I followed the princess to the drawing-room, and soon, in the circle where I was placed, her Majesty addressed me with words of kind reproach, saying it was very wrong of me to go away so soon. At dinner, the empress complained of the weather, saying: "What an opinion Madame de Choiseul will have of our climate!" If I had been near enough I would have taken the liberty of saying that, seeing the profusion of beautiful fruits and flowers that decorated the table, it was difficult not to imagine one's self under the softest of skies.

In leaving the table, her Majesty called M. de C. and me to her, and made us admire, through a large window of one pane of glass, a charming view of the park, which was laid out with great taste, and a cascade falling over artificial rocks, ornamented with ruins. The water which falls from the height of these rocks soon loses itself in a clear lake surrounded by a beautiful lawn, with groups of trees here and there,



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between which vistas have been left showing the church and the villages.

The empress said to M. de C.: "Your father was very fond of this room and this view; he used to come here very often in the time of his late Majesty, the Emperor Paul." She pronounced these last words in a sorrowful tone, repeating them twice. This worthy princess preserved a pious and tender remembrance of her unfortunate husband. Every year, on the anniversary of his death, she shut herself in the monument where the ashes of this monarch are preserved, there to pray and offer to God the sacrifice of her tears.

Her Majesty then took the arm of Madame de Lieven,<sup>1</sup> and followed by the whole court passed into the library, which was in a newly constructed gallery, perfectly lighted and containing glass bookcases filled with the most beautiful editions. Upon a long mahogany table were a number of boxes and cases containing drawings. I noticed under the windows in glass-covered tables a collection of engraved stones, and knowing that her Majesty possessed the talent, so rare in her sex, of engraving on stone, I had a great desire (but I had not the courage) to ask if among the antique *chefs-d'œuvre* there were no modern ones.

<sup>1</sup> Dorothea, Princess Lieven, a Russian lady of German extraction, celebrated for her diplomatic talents. She was born in Riga, and she died in Paris, Jan. 27, 1857. Her father, Christoph von Bendendorff, was of humble extraction; but his daughter received a brilliant education, and at an early age married Christoph Lieven, who was successively ambassador to Prussia, ambassador to London, and governor of the Czarowitz. She acquired great influence by her eminent social qualities and remarkable aptitude for public affairs. After 1837 she resided in Paris, where her salon was frequented by many diplomatists and statesmen.



## Emperor Alexander I.

The empress said that she was always pleased to show her library, which had just been fitted up. She told M. de C. that he would find there a work of his father's, the *Voyage pittoresque en Grèce*, and then suddenly addressing me, and to my great confusion, she said that my two novels were there too, and that she was awaiting the third, which she had been told was commenced. I tried to excuse myself, but her Majesty insisted, laughing with me at the distinguished honor which she said she accorded to my humble efforts.

Her Majesty then made us admire a superb collection of engravings of all kinds and some lithographs from Würtemberg so beautiful and well done that the empress made me acknowledge their superiority over the same process done in Paris. She showed us also English engravings colored with a finish and softness which approached the perfection of miniature painting. When the empress was about to retire to her private apartments, as we were making our most humble adieux, her Majesty said kindly that she trusted we would carry away an agreeable remembrance of Pawlowsky. I asked her Majesty to give me permission to visit the monuments of her beneficence at St. Petersburg. She deigned to consent and promised to have orders sent that I should be received at St. Catherine's and at the monastery of —.

The activity of this princess in employing her time is truly admirable. Except the hours which she devotes to the fine arts she is constantly busy in directing her benevolent institutions and in keeping herself informed of everything that concerns them.

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Baroness Adalberg, the chief directress of the convent, who possesses the entire confidence of her Majesty, being ill, the empress went immediately to the convent and replaced her in all her duties until she recovered.

I commenced by visiting the institute for the daughters of the nobility at St. Catherine's. The young girls, dressed elegantly but simply, some in brown, others in green, were in their classes, the masters and mistresses in their places; they were questioned in turn in history, geography, the elements of physics, rhetoric, and philosophy. I was very much amused on hearing a little girl of ten talk about Aristotle, and of the *sublime*. The method adopted to teach these young people to exercise their memories seemed to me to be excellent. All the examinations passed off marvellously. The useful occupations for women were not neglected. They showed me very beautiful needle-work done by the pupils. The dormitories and recreation rooms were scrupulously white and clean. I was present at the dinner, which was preceded by a prayer chanted by these pure young voices, giving thanks to God for his gifts.

The convent of—— is much larger than that of St. Catherine. The number of pupils, who are both from noble and burgher families, rises as high as four hundred and sixty. Baroness Adalberg, although unwell, was so kind as to receive me and have the establishment shown me by an under-directress. I was too late to hear the examinations, but I had a glance at the classes. I passed through a corridor which serves as a promenade in winter.

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It is a thousand steps long and is waxed. The buildings are handsome and well kept. From the windows there is a view of the Neva and the Summer Palace.

While I was visiting the dormitories and the recreation halls the pupils assembled in the dining-room. I was greatly struck by the sight of over four hundred young girls, all dressed alike, standing at the tables arranged in the form of a horseshoe in one immense vaulted hall. After grace all were seated, each class presided over by a mistress.

Some of the dinner was brought me on a tray to taste. It consisted of a very good soup, small pasties, beef, and vegetables. As I passed along the tables the young ladies rose politely; I begged the directress to prevent them, but as I was leaving they all rose again and made a curtsy. I returned to Madam Adalberg to express my admiration, and she promised to carry my homage to her Majesty.

These young people adore the empress as a protecting deity. Her arrival is always a holiday at the convent. They throw themselves before her Majesty and press around her like children about their mother; and so she is, occupying herself with all that can give them happiness in this world and in the next. I regretted very much not having time to visit another institution founded by the empress-mother for the poor daughters of soldiers. They learn there reading, writing, arithmetic, and the different employments of their sex, and when their education is finished means are given them to establish themselves in some occupation, or to marry, or they go out to service.

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An endowment for the foundation of a hospital for invalid soldiers would be worthy of the grandeur and munificence of the sovereign of Russia, and of the military glory of so powerful an empire; unfortunately, the funds necessary for such an establishment have not yet been raised.

# Emperor Alexander I.

## CHAPTER XXX

TWO months had passed since I left St. Petersburg. Alexander had returned to his capital, satisfied with his journey and happy to find himself again in the bosom of his family. At this time that great disaster, the inundation at St. Petersburg, occurred. The waters of the Neva, driven back by the waves of the sea and a strong wind, broke from their bed with such violence that in an instant a part of the city was inundated, before any one could prevent or arrest the overflow, or even hear, in the midst of the hurricane and the noise of the waters, the cannon which was fired from the fortress to warn the inhabitants to be on their guard.

People were surprised in the midst of their occupations by an enemy which they were unable to resist; the laborer at his work, the merchant in his shop, and the sentinel at his post; a number of persons driving about the town on business became victims of the tempestuous flood. The first stories of the houses were submerged and in a few hours the water rose in some parts of the town to the height of seventeen feet. The court quarter, by its nearness to the river, was the most exposed, and the imperial yacht was ready to receive the emperor, who with the royal family had taken refuge in the most elevated part of the palace, where he was forced to con-

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template the disasters of his people, whom he would have been willing to save at the expense of his own life.

Row-boats traversed the streets of the city and picked up many unfortunates who were being drowned in trying to reach their homes. A sentinel was carried in his sentry-box by the current as far as the Winter Palace. Seeing his sovereign at the window, the poor soldier, who even at the approach of death could not be made to forget military discipline, presented arms. They succeeded in rescuing him. A funeral cross was transported by the force of the waters from a cemetery on the other side of the river and deposited opposite the palace. This was regarded by some as a fatal omen.

As soon as the flood had abated, the emperor hastened to visit the places devastated by the inundation, and to provide for the most pressing needs of the people, whose distress was extreme at first. Salt sold for twenty-five francs a pound. The wise measures of the emperor, whose sympathies were not confined to the tears which the sight of this terrible disaster had drawn from him, soon restored order and tranquillity and effaced every trace of a misfortune as unexpected as it was terrible.

I returned to France that same year before the coronation of Charles X. There I received letters from my mother telling me that Warsaw was again rejoicing in the presence of her sovereign. Alexander was so good as to go to see her, who thanked him for all the kindnesses which he had lavished upon me during my stay at St. Petersburg. The

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emperor kindly inquired if my health had not suffered from the climate. He spoke to her also of her grandson, and said that the child was pretty, and that he had behaved very well during the christening.

My mother took the opportunity to give his Majesty one of my letters to read, in which I related a very good answer of the child. Some one having asked him on his return to France, "Your godfather is very handsome, is n't he?" "And good," answered the child without hesitation. The emperor said he was too old to be handsome and the child's word was much better.

In speaking to my mother of the Princess of Lowitch, the emperor said : "She is an angel, and has a character which one seldom finds. My brother is very fortunate." On the birthday of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine, the emperor gave the princess the grand order of St. Catherine. He invested her in it himself and begged her to surprise her august spouse in that decoration. On the princess's birthday he presented her with a magnificent necklace of pearls.

The emperor's health seemed as perfect as in his best years on this last journey to Warsaw, that is to say, in the month of June, 1825. He had never shown himself so gracious to the Poles. He seemed to want to outdo himself in kindness. He was satisfied with everything he saw, the improvements of the town, the works undertaken by the government, and was astonished that with so little money they had established several manufactures, made a public road, etc. He praised, thanked, distributed bene-

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fits, accorded favors, and inquired into the needs of every one.

In passing through Lithuania the emperor stopped at Towiany, where he showed marked kindness to the Princess Constantine R. and her husband, who had become proprietors of that estate at the death of their aunt, whose loss the emperor seemed to feel very sensibly. He was also so kind as to remember having seen me at Towiany.

The health of the Empress Elizabeth, which had for some time been delicate, decided that fatal journey to Taganrog. It is difficult to understand how and why the physicians judged the climate of that town, situated on the sea-coast and exposed in winter to very cold winds, favorable for a disease of the lungs. Redoubling his solicitude for a life which seemed to grow dear when it was menaced, the emperor accompanied his august spouse to Taganrog, and there, at the very extremity of their empire, inexorable death waited to strike with one blow its two august victims.

Alexander, being reassured by a temporary amelioration in the health of the empress, undertook a journey to Palus-Méotides. Attacked by deep melancholy, he spoke often of returning to Taganrog, whose situation had pleased him. He refused the treatment of his English physician Wylie, complaining only of frightful nervousness. Alas, it was the end! He died for not having punished his rebellious and ungrateful subjects whose horrible designs he knew. While all about him reposed upon the faith in a fictitious tranquillity, ignoring the dangers



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that menaced Russia and their sovereign, he succumbed under the weight of that terrible mystery, in the excess of his pain and the violence of his anguish letting only these words escape him: "Oh, the ungrateful monsters; I wished only their welfare!" After his death a search was made among the papers of the emperor, and there the plot was discovered.

It was too late. The blow had been dealt. The perfidy of the conspirators and their mad ingratitude had served them better, perhaps, than their parricidal dagger would have done. The rage of the assassins was disappointed. He was no more! Glory, honor, power, grace, amiability, angelic goodness, — death, merciless death had consumed them all, had destroyed all!

Alexander left life without a regret. Could he love it any longer? His last words — after attending to the duties of religion with a resignation inspired by true piety and a pure conscience — his last words, in asking to see the heaven which seemed already opening for him, show the calmness of his last moments. "What a beautiful day!" said he when they had raised the window blinds. Yes, without doubt it was a beautiful day, as it was to bring him eternal happiness and immortal glory. But it was terrible for those who were condemned to survive him, for the unfortunate and unhappy Elizabeth, whose only hope, after having received the last sigh, the last look of her husband, was to follow him to the tomb and rejoin him in heaven. She wrote: "Our angel is in heaven, and I — I vegetate still a little longer on the

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earth; but I have the hope to be soon reunited to him."

This was heart-rending news for a mother, and only religious faith can help one to bear with fortitude such a loss and such a grief. The first letter of the Empress Elizabeth had been so reassuring, the poor mother, filled with confidence and joy, had gone on foot to church to offer thanks to the All-Powerful, who seemed at last to lend an ear to the petitions of fifty millions of people, who in their prayers had asked Him to give them back their sovereign, their father. All St. Petersburg, wild with joy at the arrival of the courier who brought the glad message, and retaining by heart each touching word of the beloved empress's letter, went in crowds to the churches. The *Te Deum* was not finished when the Grand Duke Nicholas received the last and fatal news.

He returned, to the church, where every one was struck by the sudden change in his countenance. Not wishing or not being able to strike his mother's heart with such a terrible blow, he thought that religion alone could soften its sharpness. Immediately the priest advanced toward the empress, bearing in trembling hands the crucifix covered with a black veil. By the slow and solemn step and by the universal sign of grief, the unhappy mother knew what was in reserve for her, and like the divine Mother she fell at the foot of the cross.

What a heart-rending scene! The interior of the superb church of Kazan, glittering with gold and lights, the priest at the altar in his rich robes, whose every feature expressed a grief too deep for words;

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that tender mother, showing in her countenance the sudden change from joy to sorrow; the Grand Duke Nicholas divided between the feelings which overwhelmed him and his anxiety for his beloved mother; the groups of assistants whose faces expressed a mixture of doubt, hope, and fear; the mysterious light of the chapel blending with the melancholy brilliancy of the candles and lamps; all this joyous service changed to a mournful sacrifice; — what a subject for another Raphael! What material from which to create a masterpiece!

Europe learned at the same time of the illness and death of that generous prince who had given her peace and repose. There was mourning in every land. The nations were moved in learning that their friend and liberator was no more; the courts put on true mourning. The Emperor of Austria, on hearing of the death of Alexander, his faithful ally, exclaimed in an emotion of deep grief which honored himself as much as him whose loss he deplored, “Alas, I have lost my best friend!” Touching words in the mouth of a sovereign, and expressive of deep sorrow.

At the Russian embassy in Paris they were preparing for a festival in honor of the emperor's birthday. It was changed to funeral honors. I will not attempt to describe what I felt at this overwhelming event. There are griefs which only religion can calm or assuage. I heard of it without preparation, by a letter which was sent me from Paris to the country, where we were staying.

I had no sooner glanced at the letter than I gave a loud cry. M. de C., much astonished, asked me what

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it was. Sobbing I told him, saying that it could not be true. He ran to the newspaper, which he had not yet opened, and came back with tears in his eyes. It was no longer possible to doubt our misfortune. Even my child felt it. M. de C., placing his hand on the head of his son, said, "Poor child, he does not yet know what he has lost!" My Alexander, lifting his head sadly, said, "I have lost my godfather."

Each day confirmed the heart-rending news by more sinister details, details which filled the soul with indignation and horror. The opinion generally admitted, that that beautiful life had not been cut short by other hands than those of Providence, was my first consolation. Still I was constantly obliged to hear these sad words: "*The Emperor Alexander died at Taganrog*," and to see them written everywhere. They pursued me night and day: but my heart, my imagination, everything in me refused even this evidence, and I saw him as I had seen him the last time, in all his goodness and gentleness. Instead of avoiding these sad details which the newspapers offered daily, I read them eagerly. I delighted in this universal mourning, in these heart-rending regrets which found an echo in my own heart. I loved to see my sadness shared by the inhabitants of Champagne which Alexander had entered as conqueror. There was not one poor wine-grower in the environs of Epernay or Les Vertus, who did not exclaim when he heard of the death of Alexander, "Ah! what a misfortune! He saved France!" A peasant said to me one day, "Alas! madame, he was as good as he was handsome!"

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Russia and Poland were filled with grief and covered with mourning. Woe be to those who did not carry it in their hearts, and eternal shame be upon those who dared deny the fidelity which they had sworn to Alexander!

But we will turn from these dark thoughts, and behold rather how the august heirs of the virtues and power of Alexander give a unique example to the world. Brothers have been seen, sword in hand, fighting over the bloody heritage of their father; but in the noble contest between Constantine and Nicholas one sees only disinterestedness, greatness of soul, and generosity. It is well known that, regarding herself as an obstacle to the great destinies of her august husband, the Princess Lowitch threw herself at Constantine's feet and implored him to forget that she had ever existed, and to fulfil the destiny that awaited him by accepting the crown to which his birth entitled him. But Constantine was guided by his love for her, and the word he had given a dearly loved and venerated brother.

Notwithstanding his virtuous resistance, Nicholas ascended this desolate throne, where such difficult emergencies were reserved for his wisdom. God has supported him in the midst of many difficulties; may He sustain him always. If the Emperor Alexander has merited the surname of the Good, let us hope that his august follower, in imitation of that prince of immortal memory, in making his name and power respected, in preferring the love of his subjects to vainglory and renown, may receive one day from his contemporaries and from posterity the surname of

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the Irreproachable, — a beautiful title, which not only few sovereigns, but few men in private life have ever been able to merit.

I have endeavored in this modest sketch to paint Alexander from life. I shall be only too happy if those who had the good fortune to know him, to approach him, to love him, and to be devoted to him, here recognize a few traits of this grand and beautiful model, so worthy of a better pen and greater talent.

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